

FEBRUARY 1998
\$3.00/£2.00

MONTHLY REVIEW

AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST MAGAZINE

CONFRONTING THE TIME BIND

PETER MEIKSINS

VOL. 49

NEW LABOUR

SIMON KENNEDY

9

GLOBALIZING CAPITAL

ISTVÁN MÉSZÁROS

DIGITAL DIPLOMA MILLS

DAVID F. NOBLE



ALSO INSIDE:

The Judas Economy reviewed by Paul Street

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CONFRONTING THE TIME BIND: WORK, FAMILY, AND CAPITALISM by Peter Meiksins	1
NEW LABOUR AND THE REORGANIZATION OF BRITISH POLITICS by Simon Kennedy	14
THE UNCONTROLLABILITY OF GLOBALIZING CAPITAL by István Mészáros	27
DIGITAL DIPLOMA MILLS: THE AUTOMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION by David F. Noble	38
BOOKS	
<i>The Judas Economy and the Limits of Acceptable Debate:</i> A Critique of Wolman and Colamosca by Paul Street	53

MONTHLY REVIEW.

(ISSN 0027-0520) is a publication of Monthly Review Foundation, a non-profit institution. It is published monthly except July and August, when bimonthly, and copyright © 1997, by Monthly Review. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send all address changes (Form 3579) to Monthly Review Foundation, 122 West 27th Street, New York, NY 10001. EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS: 122 West 27th Street, New York, NY 10001. Telephone: (212) 691-2555. Fax: (212) 727-3676. Email: mreview@igc.apc.org. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. MR is indexed in the PAIS Bulletin, Historical Abstracts, America: History and Life, Political Science Abstracts, and the Alternative Press Index, P.O. Box 33109, Baltimore, MD 21218; tel.: (410) 243-2470. NEWSSTAND DISTRIBUTION: B.De Boer, Inc., 113 E. Centre Street, Nutley, NJ 07110; Armadillo & Co., 5795 W. Washington Boulevard, Culver City, CA 90232; Small Changes, 3443 Twelfth Avenue West, Seattle, WA 98119; Central Books, 99 Wallis Road, London, E9 5LN, England. SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: U.S.: One year \$28, students and senior citizens \$23; Foreign \$36; students and senior citizens \$32. Libraries and Institutions: U.S. \$48; Foreign \$55. Additional Postage: First Class (U.S. and Canada \$15); Airmail: Foreign \$20.

EDITORS:

Paul M. Sweezy Harry Magdoff Ellen Meiksins Wood Leo Huberman (1903-1968)
Associate Editor: W.H. Locke Anderson Assistant Editor: Kira Brunner Circulation Manager: Martin Paddio

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

Monthly Review was chosen for a 1997 Frederick Douglas Award, an award given annually by the North Star Fund. We were of course pleased to be so honored and thought that MR readers would be interested to learn more about it. In fact, considering that so many of you, as supporters and friends, are members of the MR family, the award properly belongs to you as well as the staff.

The North Star Fund was founded in 1979 with a view to creating a permanent financial base for funding progressive social change in New York City. Since its founding, millions of dollars have been granted to more than a thousand community-based organizations. The grants are not large, often quite small, and cover a wide range of social activity,

(Continued on inside back cover)

CONFRONTING THE TIME BIND: WORK, FAMILY, AND CAPITALISM

by PETER MEIKSINS

Socialists have long contended that capitalism produces distinctive and undesirable structures of time. Marx argued that capitalism created an ineluctable downward pressure on wages, forcing workers to work long hours in order to earn enough to sustain themselves. By the same token, lengthening the working day was one of the ways by which employers could increase the production of surplus-value. Marx's son-in-law, Paul Lafargue, added that capitalism disciplined workers by creating a kind of ideology of work, a moral compulsion to labor; although, in Lafargue's view, this was in part responsible for capitalism's periodic crises of overproduction, it was one of the ways by which employers were able to enforce work discipline. More recently, the great English historian E.P. Thompson documented the ways in which the rise of industrial capitalism was associated with rigid, inflexible structures of time, wherein work effort didn't vary seasonally or across the working day, as the need to maximize the productive potential of machinery, coordinate complex labor processes and, above all, to maximize the application of human labor-

Peter Meiksins teaches in the Sociology Department at Cleveland State University. He is co-author with Chris Smith of *Engineering Labour: Technical Workers in Comparative Perspective* (Verso, 1996).

power engendered a kind of obsession with time and hours of work.¹

Confronted by the reality that it was in the nature of capitalism to generate long work days and inflexible work schedules, working people made time into a terrain of struggle. Beginning more than a century ago, the labor movement confronted the issue directly by pressing for a reduction of the working day. The result was a prolonged and bitter struggle for the eight-hour day. Employers resisted steadfastly, recognizing that such an arrangement would jeopardize one of their primary ways of generating profit (a long and unregulated working day). It required decades of struggle, and considerable sacrifice, to achieve even this modest reduction in the working day in the United States.

With the advent of the eight-hour day, and with the apparent stabilization of labor-management relations in the post-Second World War era, work time ceased to be a central theme in discussions of the workplace and the U.S. capitalist economy. In the United States at least, the left abandoned its preoccupation with time, believing perhaps that it had gained for workers adequate flexibility and a reasonable amount of time away from work.

Yet, a few decades later, time has again appeared at the center of discussions of the workplace. A variety of trends have combined to make it a major issue once again. For some, the issue has become insufficient work time. The high unemployment of the 1970s and 1980s, and the growing instability of employment caused by corporate reorganization and the spread of temporary employment have eroded confidence in workers' ability to get eight hours of work if they want it. This has stimulated, in turn, renewed discussion of a more equitable distribution of work time (work sharing, a reduction of the forty-hour week, reduction of overtime, etc.); it has also encouraged speculation about the long-term disappearance of work time altogether (in such recent titles as *The Jobless Future* or *The End of Work*).

Others have argued that the real issue is too much work time. Noting that the stagnant personal incomes of the past

few decades have forced more and more family members to seek paid employment, critics have argued that this has led to a significant time deficit in many families, as two-earner couples seek to juggle work and family responsibilities and single parents have to find work to supplement inadequate government benefits. Juliet Schor's *The Overworked American* documented the reality that many Americans actually work more than a forty-hour week (and do significant amounts of unpaid labor at home as well) in order to make ends meet, hold on to increasingly scarce "secure" jobs, and sustain what has become their customary consumer lifestyle. Discussion in the popular media of "problems" such as latch-key children, inadequate institutional child care, and the parental search for quality time with their kids reflects this expansion of work time. Evidence that a significant number of employees would prefer flexible or reduced hours, and the corporate efforts, often cosmetic, to initiate "family-friendly" policies do so as well.

A new and much-publicized book by Arlie Russell Hochschild adds another dimension to the emerging debate about whether we are working too much or too little. In *The Time Bind*, Hochschild argues that many Americans are, in fact, spending more time at work and find themselves less and less able to find adequate time for their domestic lives. However, she adds that Americans are doing so, in some sense, voluntarily. As the subtitle of the book indicates (*When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work*), she believes that some Americans have taken refuge in work. Confronted by increasingly unfulfilling, unmanageable, conflict-ridden domestic lives, they flee into the workplace. Moreover, for some workers, workplaces reshaped by such innovations as Total Quality Management (TQM) have become more "home-like." In a profound irony, it is at work that such employees find the support, praise, and gratification that they expected to gain at home.

Hochschild's new book performs a valuable service in documenting the ways in which workers of all kinds (from assembly line workers to managerial workers) spend more

time on the job. It raises a wide variety of issues which already have been, and will be debated in the mainstream and academic press. Rather than repeat these discussions here, I would like to raise several questions of particular relevance to the readers of *Monthly Review*. As I read *The Time Bind*, I was struck by the way in which Hochschild presented a kind of inversion of a classic argument developed by Marx in his early writings. Consider the following quotations, the first from Hochschild, the second from Marx:

In this new model of family and work life, a tired parent flees a world of unresolved quarrels and unwashed laundry for the reliable orderliness, harmony and managed cheer of work. The emotional magnets beneath home and workplace are in the process of being reversed.²

The worker, therefore feels at ease only outside work, and during work he is outside himself. He is at home when he is not working and when he is working he is not at home.... The result, therefore, is that man (the worker) feels that he is acting freely only in his animal functions—eating, drinking and procreating, or at most in his shelter and finery—while in his human functions he feels only like an animal.³

Is Hochschild right, that what Marxists have traditionally regarded as the realm of alienation, the capitalist workplace, has ironically become a kind of refuge from the realities of contemporary capitalist private life? And, more generally, what should be the relationship between “work” and “private life” or “family”? Let us consider these (and related) questions posed for socialists by Hochschild’s view of “the time bind.”

Fleeing From What To Where?

What exactly is happening to the relationship between work and private life in contemporary capitalism? Hochschild contends that the evolution of capitalism has transformed family life into something desperately unsatisfactory, while at the same time producing workplaces which, in a way at least, offer the kind of gratification people once got at home. The

result, she believes, is the flight into work. But is this an accurate view of contemporary society?

We must ask first why the many people who are working more are doing so. While it may be true that some Americans choose to work long hours because they prefer work to home (as satirized recently in the *Sally Forth* comic strip), it is also true that many, perhaps most Americans work long hours because they feel they must. Many low-income Americans string together a sequence of part-time or temporary jobs, resulting in long working and commuting hours; it is hardly plausible that they do so because they find gratification in the chaotic work schedules, low wages, transitory social relationships, and monotonous tasks they typically encounter. On the contrary, it is obvious that these workers tolerate long hours because of the need to generate income, a necessity that has become more urgent as wages have stagnated and the social wage has been gradually reduced. Similarly, in what sense do workers whose long hours are the result of the imposition of mandatory overtime “choose” to work beyond eight hours a day? True, many of the workers caught in this situation value the overtime, and there is evidence that many workers seek overtime, whether it is mandatory or not. But most of them do so because they value the income they earn in this way. In the 1990s, the principal way in which blue-collar workers are able to achieve a “middle-class” income is through working long hours. Moreover, the reality of plant closings and declining numbers of well-paid blue-collar jobs creates real pressure to seek or accept overtime. After all, it is better to earn the money while you still can, and how many would jeopardize a scarce, well-paid blue collar job by refusing overtime or asking for reduced hours?⁴

Managerial and professional workers, whose jobs offer more in the way of both financial and intrinsic rewards, might be a different matter. It is at least plausible that such workers would find the workplace attractive enough to draw them away from the home. However, here too it is apparent that a considerable degree of compulsion is responsible for the long hours being worked. Indeed, many of the cases presented in

Hochschild's book (the bulk of which are professional and managerial workers) suggest that the flight into work is coerced at least as much as it is voluntary.

For example, she describes the case of "Eileen," a female engineer who, in Hochschild's terms, decided, when her daughter was born, to give up the "exciting" time of work for the "boring" time of home life. Hochschild describes this as a "sacrifice." And there is a sense in which this is true, since she valued her work time and since her husband could not (given the realities of his workplace) transform his work time into child care time. However, Hochschild's description of what Eileen really wanted suggests that she doesn't see work as preferable to domestic work; rather, it suggests that she sees them both as valuable:

Eileen was ambitious. She liked this about herself and so did Jim [her husband]. What she wanted instead of a "mommy track" was an array of possible timetables that allowed women and men alike to combine ambition and family.⁵

Thus, while Hochschild selects Eileen to illustrate an aspect of the flight into work, her case actually demonstrates a rather different set of priorities. Moreover, her experiences, as documented by Hochschild, show clearly the degree to which long hours of work are compelled, even for high-level employees. After choosing to go part-time, Eileen experienced significant conflicts with her boss, who believed in time as a measure of commitment to work. Eventually she was laid off in a reorganization, in part because her part-time status made her vulnerable. She was able to find another position in the organization somewhat later, but only on a full-time basis. Ironically, from the point of view of Hochschild's thesis, Eileen's experiences made her feel "divorced from work," resulting in her eventual request to return to part-time status (when she had another child).

Hochschild's male respondents provide insight on a different dimension of the compulsory character of long hours in high-level jobs. While some of them fit her model of the individual attracted more to work than to domestic life,

some of them expressed a desire to work less. Whether they did so or not, however, they did not feel free to reduce their work hours and/or tended to reject the idea of “flexibility” or reduced hours in general. The men who wanted to reduce their work commitments indicated that they were not free to do so; their employers wouldn’t accept a male employee who sacrificed work for family. Indeed, Hochschild documents the emergence of a stigma against family men in the corporation she studied; family men were not considered “serious players” and paid a high price for their “lack of commitment.” Male managers tended to reject family-friendly policies which allowed for reduced work, in part because it was perceived as a challenge to male ways of doing things.

As Lotte Bailyn has argued, there exists in most organizations a model which emphasizes the importance of employees’ virtually boundless time commitment to the job.⁶ It is this model which compels male employees to work very long hours, whether they want to or not. And, as Hochschild makes clear, although she tends to neglect the implications of her own evidence, this compulsion works for women as well. As she puts it:

The news of this book is that growing numbers of working women are leery of spending more time at home, as well. They feel torn, guilty, and stressed out by their long hours at work; but they are ambivalent about cutting back on those hours. Women fear losing their places at work, and having such a place has become a source of security, pride and a powerful sense of being valued.⁷

In other words, women (like men), whether they want to work long hours or not, must work long hours if they are to retain their jobs and advance their careers in a world dominated by a male model of work commitment.

Of course, it is also true that some (perhaps many) people who work long hours do so both because they have to and because they want to. And Hochschild does present evidence that many people feel their family lives to be less satisfactory than their work lives. But this leads to two other questions. First, what kind of gratification do people get when they commit to the work-

place as an alternative to the dissatisfactions of home life? And, why are people dissatisfied at home?

We should not dismiss the real gratification that people get from work, even when the work does not appear to be stimulating or well-paid. Nevertheless, it is also easy to overstate the degree to which the “new” workplace provides a home-like environment outside the home. Hochschild herself documents the degree to which the same corporations that use innovations such as TQM to “enhance” the workplace regularly lay off long-service employees or move people out of their comfortable corporate niche as a result of reorganization (causing some of them to feel “divorced” from work, as we saw). Others have argued that contemporary managerial practices, which emphasize the creation of a cohesive workplace family and a unified corporate culture, oblige employees to create a kind of dual self in which, while at work, they must effectively deny aspects of the identity they maintain outside work (resulting in various kinds of psychic tension).⁸ In short, while even capitalist workplaces provide employees with various forms of gratification, the view that work has grown “better” as home has grown “worse” does not stand up well to the existing evidence about the realities of the contemporary workplace.

We must ask, as well, why so many workers find their domestic lives to be so unsatisfactory. Contrary to Hochschild’s contention, most American women do not simply “devalue” domestic work, particularly child care. Indeed, Sharon Hays, in a recent, provocative essay on ideologies of motherhood, argues that the majority of the women to whom she spoke embraced, in some way, an ideology of “intensive mothering” in which child care is seen as clearly superior to work.⁹ Many of Hochschild’s respondents also express a desire, which their work schedules frustrate, to spend more time at home.

But they feel rushed and pressured at home and find that tensions and conflicts, rather than quality time and sociability, are often typical of domestic life. By her own account, much of this is a direct result of long hours of work—people feel

unable to devote enough time to their home lives because they feel compelled to work long hours. Moreover, as Hochschild notes, most people find it much easier to control and reorganize their domestic time than their work time (where someone else controls time for them); the result is that they cut corners and create rigid schedules which, in turn, makes their domestic lives less satisfactory than they had hoped. The fact that men remain reluctant (or, in some cases, unable) to perform domestic labor makes it even harder to “manage” at home.¹⁰ There is, in fact, little evidence in Hochschild’s book of a new rejection or flight from home life. True, most men do seem to prefer work to home (and enjoy home more because they work there less), but this is hardly new. Women may find home unsatisfactory, and may be working more. But they do so, in part, because they have to work more; and the need to work more plays a major role in making home life less satisfactory.

Should We Work More? Or Less?

The empirical questions raised by *The Time Bind* lead to a larger, more theoretical question: how much should we work? Implicit in Hochschild’s argument is the view that we work too much. She clearly regards it as a problem that so many workers work long hours and that they do not spend more time at home. She also finds it troubling that we have allowed so many aspects of home life to be commodified (e.g., the transformation of cooking into the purchase of prepared food), that family life has become rigid and “scheduled” due to time pressures, and that some have even begun to deny or downplay the importance of emotional life at home.¹¹

But, we must also ask, “what’s wrong with work?” After all, as Marx and other social theorists have argued, productive activity is a distinctively human process through which human beings express themselves and relate to the material world. Work under capitalism may not be as fulfilling as it could be; work under capitalism may also take on a compulsory character which undermines the possibilities of self-expression inherent in it; and it may be that capitalism compels people to work longer hours than they would choose to if it weren’t for

the need to generate income, the insecurity of employment, and the rigid models of appropriate work commitment characteristic of capitalist organizations. Still, we need to guard against the temptation to argue that working long hours *per se* is bad. It is, rather, the obligatory character of long hours of work and inflexible work schedules that is the problem.

By the same token, it is possible to forget the tyrannical and compulsory character of family life as presently organized. It is commonplace in contemporary scholarship, both conservative and progressive, to portray the family as a "haven" (indeed, Hochschild uses this language extensively in her book). In this view, the close social relations and emotional ties that, in theory at least, characterize family life are preferable to the instrumental, competitive world of the workplace. If the workplace usurps this part of family life, it is a poor substitute for what ought to be taking place at home. But there is a long feminist tradition (which, in some degree, should include Engels) which points out the patriarchal and often violent and exploitative relationships lying beneath the veneer of sociability within the family. Sharon Hays notes that there is nothing natural or inevitable about our contemporary view of how family life ought to be structured; her research shows how the prevailing ideology of intensive mothering and the emphasis on the emotional life of the child have been historically created and reinforced, in part, by "experts." Alternatives to this model of family life, many of which demanded less time and emotional commitment on the part of parents, have existed throughout history. For example, affluent parents have long assigned much of the work of rearing children to institutions and/or to adults from other social classes; there is also a long history of ordinary people raising children with the help of extended families, neighbors, and community support. And as Hays notes, the belief that children require virtually continuous intensive attention from a single adult is a relatively modern development, which would have seemed strange to parents of all social classes as little as forty years ago. It may be that people would choose to parent intensively if they were left to their own

devices, but at present, at least, this is not a choice but a cultural obligation, particularly when it comes to mothers.¹²

In fairness to Hochschild, it should be pointed out that she doesn't advocate a simple return to traditional motherhood. Rather, she talks of the need for a fight on both the time and gender fronts to create a society both more equal (i.e., where men's and women's lives could be structured similarly) and more accepting of child care by both men and women. She is clearly looking towards a society in which the desire to work doesn't automatically trump the desire to raise children. We may reject her emphasis on "values" as the cause of the shift away from home, but the goal towards which she is pointing remains worth pursuing.

What would this alternative relationship between work and family look like? Hochschild correctly notes that it is not just a matter of fighting for reduced hours: there is a need to challenge the entire culture of time as a measure of work commitment. There is also a need to allow for a diversity of needs and preferences. In a recent book, Christine Nippert-Eng¹³ demonstrates that people vary in the way they wish to manage the relationship between home and work. Some wish work to be dominant, some wish home to be dominant. And whichever dominates, there are great variations in how the relationship between the two is defined. None of this should mean that people can't spend a lot of time at work; it should mean that they shouldn't have to if they don't want to. In other words, there is a need for a more flexible attitude to time, for a society in which work and domestic lives can be balanced in a variety of ways. One-size-fits-all solutions will not work.

Achieving this degree of flexibility will require a fundamental restructuring of society. In considering why, it is useful to recall one of Marx and Engels' most famous statements about the nature of a postcapitalist order. In *The German Ideology*, there is a famous passage in which Marx and Engels decry the compulsory character of the capitalist division of labor, which condemns people to a narrow sphere of activity:

... whereas in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic.¹⁴

It is conventional to dismiss this image as either unrealistic or hopelessly muddled. But, it has the inestimable virtue of reminding us of the degree to which capitalism confines human activity to one sphere and makes it impossible for people to combine the various activities involved in a full human existence. Let us add “parent” to the list of activities mentioned by Marx and Engels: can we combine parenthood with our other diverse activities as long as we live within a social system which, often irrationally, requires long hours of work and a rigid compartmentalization of the various spheres of human activity?

Capitalism may be incompatible with a solution to these problems, but it has created conditions under which Marx and Engels’ formulations begin to seem less utopian. We inhabit a world in which many people work too much, while some cannot find enough work, a world where some would like to work more and some would like to work less, a world where the desire to work may vary over the course of one’s life. If it weren’t mandatory for everyone who works to work endlessly, there would be plenty of work to go around. If the traditional male definition of work as a greedy, all-encompassing commitment were shattered, working long hours would become an option rather than a necessity. The result might be a world in which people chose how much they worked and when. In a postcapitalist world, in which the causes of our present need to work long hours were removed, it might be possible, after all, to make a reality of what appeared to be an impractical, utopian dream of the youthful Marxist imagination.

NOTES

1. Marx's comments on wages, time, and work schedules are scattered throughout his works of political economy, most notably *Capital*. See also Paul Lafargue, *The Right To Be Lazy* (Chicago: Charles Kerr, 1883; reprint 1974); E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Customs in Common* (New York: The New Press, 1991) pp. 352-403.
2. Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Time Bind* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1997) p. 44.
3. Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts", in Allen Wood, ed., *Marx: Selections* (New York: Macmillan, 1988) p. 46.
4. Good examples of automobile workers' attitudes towards overtime can be found in Richard Feldman and Michael Betzold, eds., *The End of the Line* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990).
5. Hochschild, p. 97.
6. See Lotte Bailyn, *Breaking the Mold* (New York: Free Press, 1993).
7. Hochschild, pp. 246-7.
8. See Gideon Kunda, *Engineering Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).
9. Sharon Hays, *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).
10. In a revealing example, Hochschild documents the case of Deb and Mario, both of whom work very long hours. She shows that Mario worked long hours, in part, to escape the pressure to help out at home. Deb, by the same token, worked long hours in order to force Mario to do his share. Hochschild, pp. 175-93.
11. See Hochschild, pp. 219-38.
12. Hays argues that the ideology of intensive mothering is a challenge to capitalism, a contradiction of its tendency to commodify all social relationships and to value economic activity above all else. However, one might just as easily argue that it perpetuates the artificial division between work and home which has characterized capitalism since its inception; it also is a useful way to justify capitalist society's failure to provide the socialized child care and other domestic services that are needed to allow parents to work long hours—after all, if it's crucial that mothers (or at least a parent) care for their kids, providing adequate child care at affordable prices would actually be a bad thing!
13. Christine Nippert-Eng, *Home and Work* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
14. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The German Ideology," in *Marx: Selections*, Allen Wood, ed., (New York: Macmillan, 1988) p. 97.

NEW LABOUR AND THE REORGANIZATION OF BRITISH POLITICS

by SIMON KENNEDY

Commentators struggled to find words to express last year's Conservative Party defeat in Britain: "wipeout," "melt-down," and "annihilation" were among the favorites. Few believe the Conservative Party will be in any shape to mount a serious challenge at the next election. Their comprehensive defeat amounted to a rejection of over a decade's politics. The whole Tory record was repudiated. In the electoral referendum on its legacy Thatcherism was discarded.

This rejection of Thatcherism, however, could not contrast more strongly with the apparent acceptance of its key ideological themes by the Labour Party leadership. Arguably, Mrs. Thatcher's greatest achievement lies in assembling a body of ideas to explain the postwar crisis which convinced the political classes that urgent action was needed and claimed to provide the cure. The ingredients of the remedy are familiar: (a) giving priority to the reduction of inflation; (b) privatization of state-owned industry, creating a financial windfall that helped win over a section of working-class voters, and distancing the state from the direct operation of the economy; (c) deregulation of industry; (d) trade union legislation to reduce the scope for militancy.

Simon Kennedy is a member of the Labour Party in London. He is an editor of *Labour Left Briefing*.

The new government has not flinched from this course. Thatcher's "preference-shaping strategy" appears to have been successful. The Labour Party has embarked on a neoliberal economic policy that continues all the central tenets of the 1980s agenda, going so far as to present it as a model for the rest of Europe to imitate. Yet the acceptance of the Thatcherite poison chalice will implicate the Labour government "in a deeply contradictory settlement."¹

A Crisis of the State

The electoral rejection of Thatcherism represents a wider crisis of the state, which includes a break up of established social alliances, an impasse of economic strategy, and the exhaustion of a political system in which the Conservative Party was the natural party of government.

The liberation of market forces from social restraint in the 1980s succeeded in substantially restructuring British society. The cash nexus undermined many stabilizing institutions, weakening the authority patterns, local networks and organizations that made conservative Britain so sturdy. The securities of community, work, place, and tradition are irrelevant to the march of money; allegiance to nation and party come second for the sovereign consumer.

Thatcher undid central elements of the postwar settlement, creating a state on the model of a holding company. The state has been "contracting" in two senses of the word: it has narrowed the scope of its activities by withdrawing from many of its traditional functions, and it is contracting out many of those functions.² Local councils, once a power base for the Labour Party in Britain's urban centers, have been transformed into boards of directors, inviting bids from private enterprise.

These changes, while bringing little competitive benefit, were designed to alter the balance of forces between labor and capital to the benefit of the latter. They were meant to (a) create the necessary revenue to establish an electoral base of support with measures like tax cuts; (b) disorganize centers of local resistance; and (c) reshape the provision of services to

establish a new set of local elites by means of central government patronage.³

Thatcherism was supposed to create a "shareholding democracy," in which small investors would become not only homeowners but owners of stocks, especially in the privatized utilities. But the failures of the decade became more apparent as this fantasy refused to materialize and house owners became mired in debt. Thatcher had enjoyed a breathing space, her economic failures partly disguised by the windfall of huge revenues from North Sea oil, but John Major had no such advantage. Although his moves toward closer European integration met with little opposition at first, open war soon broke out within the Conservative Party over European union. The policies adopted by the government in order to meet the conditions of entry into the European Exchange Rate Mechanism had catastrophic results. Division in the Conservative Party hardened and set the seal on the government's future. The assault on living standards that integration into the European Union requires produced a backlash in the country and destroyed all remnants of support for the party. Major never recovered.

Thatcherite economic logic did, however, dovetail with the interests of the enormous British military complex and sections of the City, the heart of British finance capital, both of which are fused to the Conservative Party. British capitalist interests are more internationally distributed than those of rival capitalism. London remains one of the biggest futures markets and funds management centers in the world, directing up to half the world's acquisitions and mergers. Having said that, Britain's great attraction to outside investors like the Japanese and Americans is its access to Europe.

Polls among business leaders show deep divisions of opinion over closer economic integration with continental Europe. Although there is a majority in favor, those opposed are resolute. The open factional divisions within the Conservatives therefore express a genuine strategic dilemma. The parties of British capitalism will continue to be torn between two opposing visions: the Hong Kong-style "world island" of cheap labor and financial services, which is the option favored by the Tory

right, and participation in an increasingly integrated Europe, as Britain resigns itself to its loss of imperial status.

Britain's "Collectivist" Majority

The disintegration of the Conservative Party, especially its evident inability to reposition Britain economically, means that capital needs a different party-political arrangement to implement neoliberal austerity. The contradiction for New Labour is that while Blair and Co. are organizing around the demands of business, public opinion has swung in the other direction.

The collapse of the Conservative vote was a sure indication of vast dissatisfaction with the politics of the market and cuts in public spending. Yet the government's spending targets are even lower than those of the Tories and require a higher reduction than any since the war. With no intention on the part of the government to increase taxes on higher earners, or on stock dividends, a future of hospital closures and welfare reduction is inevitable. The National Health Service, Britain's popular public health care system, has always been sacred to Labourism, a symbol of its postwar achievement. But the "no holds barred" review of the NHS currently underway foreshadows huge cuts that will be impossible to hide or to dress up in the currently fashionable language of "stakeholding" and "community."

In 1996, the British Social Attitudes survey found that over half the respondents agreed that there should be redistribution from rich to poor, that big business profits at the expense of workers, that there is one law for the rich and one for the poor, that unemployment is more of a priority than inflation, that unemployment benefits are too low, and so on. As right-wing commentators complain from time to time, "the British public remains hopelessly collectivist in its attitudes"⁴—by which they simply mean that people want more spending on social provision, and health, higher benefits, and better education. Incredibly, sixty percent favor increasing taxes to pay for these programs, while only five percent are

opposed. Thatcherite “preference-shaping” seems not to have succeeded with the electorate.

It is this so-called “collectivist” majority that Labour relied on for election, even though its own intentions were quite different. In this, it is part of a tendency throughout the European Union, where parties associated with welfarism are elected to office but then proceed to impose austerity programs on hostile electorates.

The election campaign can be seen, therefore, as a huge operation in pretense. Labour was forced to portray its own privatization program, for example, as a new way of working, avoiding the “P” word and not deviating from attacks on the Tory record. Dissident voices were silenced under the command of the head office to stay “on message.” Spokespersons during the election campaign refused to be drawn on the issue, dismissing the private-public division as “old fashioned.” Those who suggested that increasing public spending was unavoidable were told that “more imaginative” ways of funding social services were needed. Needless to say, head office ingenuity did not come up with anything.

Labour’s electoral success was not, however, unambiguous. Despite the landslide in seats, the Labour Party actually received a smaller share of votes than in both the defeats of 1951 and 1955, and the victories of 1945, 1950, and 1966. The drama of 1997 lay in the Tory collapse, rather than Captain Tony’s charge to victory. Turnout was the smallest since 1935, and nine out of the ten lowest turnouts were in Labour Party seats. The 30.7 percent share of the vote that went Conservative was their lowest since 1832: it was primarily this melt down that returned Labour with a huge majority.

The incredibly high poll ratings for the party and its leader after their first months in office express both the huge relief at ousting the Tories and the continuing belief that Labour will pursue pro-welfare policies. As a public relations achievement this is impressive. Blair’s skills in this department seem to know no bounds: they were, for example, employed to great effect in the death of Princess Diana. He was able to identify with her concern for the underprivileged while at the

same time supporting—some would say to rescuing—the beleaguered monarchy. Blair continues to capitalize on anti-Tory sentiment. For the present, cuts are postponed pending the conclusions of various review bodies. Barring unforeseeable disaster, the honeymoon can continue for a while. No one wants to contemplate the thought that this lot is as bad as the previous bunch.

Blair's central problem in government therefore remains ahead of him: how to build a durable electoral base for austerity in a country where opinion is what the right calls "collectivist" and he leads a party perceived as pro-welfare.

Dismantling the Labor Movement

When the effects of Labour's economic course become more apparent it is inevitable that the present high poll ratings will turn into their opposite. Behind the hype, the New Labour political machine is well aware of its fragile position. Everything in the party is being put in place to cope with the expected backlash. It is essential for the party elite that they be insulated from the "collectivist" majority, especially to the extent that the demands of that majority are taken up by trade unions and the party's grass roots.

As Foreign Minister Robin Cook commented in his bid for election to the NEC, "I know from experience that previous Labour governments have been weakened by confrontation with the party in the country." The activist layer has the advantage of political experience and a range of formal and informal political ties. Party workers typically are active trade unionists, with links in the community and an input into the workings of the local state through town council structures and voluntary agencies. They are a social layer that is particularly sensitive to cutbacks in public spending. Many are teachers and local government workers. Under the present configuration of the labor movement, this constituency, when organized around clear objectives, can limit the range of leadership actions.

To achieve its objectives, then, the party leadership needs to eliminate the organization's democratic practices. It has to

end trade union influence, and it must also corrode the power of the party rank-and-file, undoing the various mechanisms by which trade unions and local party organizations—the constituency parties—have traditionally exercised influence on party policy and in choosing the party leadership. Already much of the organization's internal life has been subordinated to the priorities of the élite's electoral strategy, which takes for granted that the involvement of the membership is electorally damaging.

Dismantling the structures of union and constituency power was the centerpiece of the leadership's proposals to the annual party conference in 1997. This concern with internal organizational issues sometimes seems to verge on obsession. The problem for the leadership has, paradoxically, been aggravated by the size of its triumph. No one had predicted the landslide of seats, and the day after their stunning victory, party leaders were faced with a swathe of Labour MPs who, because they had contested seats no one expected them to win, had not been suitably screened. The very first issue on the agenda was not to celebrate, nor to talk about how to run the country, but to draw up a list of the "potentially mischievous" among the intake.

The leadership's plan for reorganizing the party can be found in the document *Partnership in Power*. It has its origins in the pamphlet *New Labour: a Stakeholders' Party*, produced for the 1996 party conference by a group on the right of the party called the Labour Coordinating Committee. That pamphlet, together with a synopsis of consumerist politics, delineates most of the features of the present changes: marginalizing the trade unions; ending the system in which delegates from the constituency parties and from the trade unions have played a major role in party conferences and decision-making processes; making constituency parties merely social clubs and electoral associations instead of important elements in party decisions; turning the party conference into just a showcase; and establishing an executive that is completely under the control of the leader.

The membership will no longer, as it did in the old delegate-based system, present resolutions at the party's various levels, to discuss, amend, and argue for them. This "divisive" method is to be eliminated in the interests of "democracy."⁵ The deceptively democratic system of voting within the party ("one member one vote," or OMOV) disguises the loss of real popular power, traditionally exercised by delegations especially at the annual conference. The conference now exists simply to "hear the views of experts or key figures from inside and outside of the Party." The changes will end all opportunities for the membership to initiate policy from below. In the same way that the business community is to determine business policy, and the Bank of England is to control monetary policy (one of the first major moves by the government was to hand over this function to the Bank), politics will be left to the professionals.

Voting reforms have also been introduced to ensure that undesirable—particularly left-wing—candidates will not be chosen to run for Parliament or for the European Parliament. Dissenting party members have been silenced and even expelled. Now, even sympathetic newspapers like the *Guardian* have taken to describing the Blair leadership as "authoritarian."

Partnership in Power makes it clear that the actions of the leadership from now on will be beyond the control of party members, who are told to "respect the distinct responsibilities and duties of the National Executive Committee and the Party." The leadership's "prime responsibility...is to the people, the country at large and Parliament." This telling insertion into the party's constitution effectively removes the connection of the elite to the party, giving them free rein to act according to their own perception of the national interest.

There is, of course nothing particularly new in the *Partnership in Power* model: before modern parties the paradigm of politics was a tournament in which elites competed for the blessing of the electorate. Exclusion of the masses from active participation in politics is the historical norm rather than the exception. Up to now, the British Labour Party has in a

number of respects departed from that norm, but those days appear to be over.

Preparing the New Political Bloc

Partnership in Power is more than just a change in the internal organization of one political party. It is an essential element in the realignment of British politics as a whole. The ruling class formation represented by Conservative Party hegemony has come to an end and politics is readjusting in search of a new stable system for regulating capitalist democracy. The end of Tory predominance requires a new political formation to enact the imperatives of capital. Conservative guardianship is to be replaced with a new Blair-led coalition charged with carrying out austerity. The proposals do away with the potential obstacle of the Labour Party's structure and membership.

Decoupling the leadership from the membership will allow Blair to speed the process of recomposing the political "center" which has been taking place over the last few years. The inclusion of the third party Liberal Democrats in a cabinet committee has been hailed as a new politics of nonconfrontation and cooperation. Similarly, the appointment of leading business figures to positions of responsibility supposedly expresses the openness of government. The effect, however, will not be so much an all-inclusiveness as an *exclusion* of some interests to make room for the inclusion of others.

The future coalitionist direction is obvious. Liberal Democrat MPs can now see government ministers "almost on demand."⁶ Nearly all the conditions are in place for the pro-European Conservative Party wing associated with former Chancellor of the Exchequer (Minister of Finance) Kenneth Clarke to split from the Conservatives and make some working arrangement with Blair.

The stage will be set for a new bloc of those committed to neoliberal policies. As Tony Benn, for a long time the leading spokesman of the left in the Labour Party, has commented, "such a party would be stronger than the Tories in dismantling the welfare state, taking Britain into a single currency under the control of a central bank, and cutting

public expenditure and wages in the name of labor flexibility and globalization.”⁷

A referendum on the voting system is promised for later in the parliamentary term. State funding for political parties will break both Tory links with business and Labour’s connection to the unions. Proportional representation (probably in a form designed to give party leaders maximum power in selecting candidates) will undoubtedly split the vote among several parties and wipe out the governing party’s majority, forcing the birth of a new political alliance. A formation will emerge that precludes the influence of the membership, sidelining the inconvenient influence of the labor movement and shorn of meaningful democracy. That the party realignment associated with a new voting system might also give rise to a new political party of the left, created by disaffected members of the Labour left with other socialists.

A New Stage of Social Democracy

It is difficult to place Blair in the same social democratic tradition as his predecessors. The political, social and economic landscape is so different. Although a previous Labour prime minister, Harold Wilson, also came to office—in the 1960s—in a flurry of talk about “modernization,” what he had in mind was not, like Blair, neoliberalism or the gutting of party democracy, but rather reform of the state administration and better management of the economy, with more state intervention.

While New Labour’s spin doctors constantly use the language of social democracy for the purpose of persuasion, the substance of that language is constantly subverted. Equality has come to mean “equality of opportunity” rather than a more equal society, full employment is equated with giving everyone the “chance” to work, socialism has come to mean some vague and empty social “cooperation,” and so on. There is no commitment to rebuilding Britain’s manufacturing industry, more progressive taxation is ruled out, public expenditure is to be cut even more vigorously than under the Tories, and the state is to withdraw from pursuing all “political” goals: its role “is to make the market more dynamic.”⁸

There is no evidence that the government's plans include reducing a poverty level that is the worst in the European Community outside Greece and Portugal.

Even veteran leaders of the Labour right, like former Deputy Leader of the party Roy Hattersley, balk at the extent of abandonment of social democratic commitments.⁹ It therefore seems appropriate to talk about a new—maybe final—stage in British social democracy. No longer operating the postwar settlement, it is attempting to lead the austerity drive favored by business.

Prospects and Impediments

Blair and his allies will face all the same impediments that beset John Major. The weaknesses of post-imperial British capitalism are well known: a swollen military and financial sector, structural underinvestment, and a feeble manufacturing base are among its most prominent deficiencies. And Blair shows no sign of resolving the international contradiction of a Britain caught between its place in the European economy and its postwar role as second fiddle to Uncle Sam. All his interventions into European politics have been to cement U.S. hegemony.

While the desire to get the Labour Party into office outweighed all other considerations the Blair team was allowed a free hand. This is changing. The *Partnership in Power* proposals met with unprecedented opposition from constituency parties, despite the leadership's efforts to suppress discussion by rushing them through (during only six weeks of summer, when most local parties close down), and despite the fact that no amendments were permitted at the 1997 party conference. At that conference, this government's first one in office, a record one hundred constituencies put motions in favor of delay or rejection. The leadership was forced to rely on behind the scenes deals with union bosses to get it through. Just as significantly, the leadership's favorite, Peter Mandelson, who is personally responsible for the party re-organization, failed to get elected to the party executive on a ballot of

the whole membership, despite personal endorsement from Blair. The hard left Ken Livingstone won the place instead.

This opposition should not be overstated. The left remains pitifully weak, and there is still a tendency in the party to blame the King's wicked advisers rather than King Tony himself. But cracks are showing. In the first by-election since the general election, a popular local candidate was controversially vetoed by the leadership in favor of a Blair appointee in a seat that Labour was close to winning. The subsequent defeat and five percent swing to the Tories indicated the fragility of the support for Blair and voter disquiet with his authoritarian methods. The government also misjudged the political mood in Wales, where the vote on whether there should be a Welsh assembly—part of the government's policies on "devolution" of certain powers away from the central state to local assemblies in Scotland and Wales—was won by an incredibly narrow margin. Divisions are also beginning to emerge on European Monetary Union.

The leadership's accomplishments so far are due above all to the feebleness of their principal opponents—the Conservative Party and the left of the labor movement. Their technocratic idiom and their discourse of "modernization" has not built a lasting base of popular support. While the communitarian rhetoric of rights and responsibilities has given political scientists a new set of concepts to discuss, it has not turned into action to improve the lot of the poor. Instead, the needy are ritually issued directives, rules, and regulations. Their responsibilities are regularly catalogued by the government's spokespersons. But it is far from clear what the *rights* of those without capital are supposed to be under the new government. Similarly, beyond the maximization of profit, there is silence on the corresponding responsibilities of capital and the rich: there will be no increase in taxation for the wealthy and no attempt to restrict the latitude of the City.

Indeed, the distinguishing feature of the new administration has been a social authoritarianism rather than concern for the disadvantaged. "Welfare to work" schemes are more stringent than any of the Conservative attacks on the poor.

The notion of welfare as a social insurance entitlement has been discarded. The responsible minister, Frank Field, is currently assessing how to privatize the whole system. The right to free university education has been abandoned.

British social democracy, then, is giving way to a capitalism unwilling to sustain welfare provision at its current level, and to a new kind of redistribution consisting mainly of subsidies and handouts from the state to business. By remaining resolutely within the neoliberal framework the Labour Party is denying itself the possibility of escape from the predicament of the Thatcherite legacy. Instead of using the dissatisfaction with the Tory record to build a popular preference-shaping project of genuine reform, the party leadership is on course for direct confrontation with those who put it in office. By refusing to challenge the ancien regime's prerogatives and the domination of the City, the Labour government has left itself no other way to increase investment but an offensive against wages, social spending and the price of labor.

The media techniques now used to run national politics will not be able to conceal this reality. It remains to be seen how New Labour is going to manage to sell the austerity package to a hostile electorate for the next five years. As the party historically identified with the welfare state, it will find its chosen task doubly difficult.

NOTES

1. Colin Hay, "Anticipating Accommodations, Accommodating Anticipations," *Politics and Society* (June 1997), p.42. Hay talks about the "preference-shaping" strategy in "Labour's Thatcherite Revisionism: Playing the 'Politics of Catch-Up,'" *Political Studies* XL VII (1994), p. 705.
2. Harden, *The Contracting State* (Open University, 1992).
3. See Bob Jessop, Kevin Bonnett, Simon Bromley, Tom Ling, "Popular Capitalism, Flexible Accumulation and Left Strategy," *New Left Review* 165 (September/October, 1987).
4. Samuel Brittain, "Better Than Your Deserve," *Financial Times*, May 3, 1997.
5. The quotations here come from *Labor into Power*, an earlier and nearly identical version of *Partnership in Power*.
6. Patrick Wintour, "The Road Ahead for Labour," *The Observer* (September 28, 1997).
7. "The End of Choice at the Ballot Box," *The Observer* (July 27, 1997).
8. Tony Blair, *The Times* (May 13, 1995).
9. See, for instance, Hattersley's "Why I'm No Longer Loyal to Labour," *The Guardian* (July 24, 1996).

THE UNCONTROLLABILITY OF GLOBALIZING CAPITAL

by ISTVÁN MÉSZÁROS

The Iranian diaspora is an extraordinary community, but one not often noted in the Western press. This community can be compared to the Russian diaspora of the 1890s, or the German of the 1930s. That is to say, an exiled community of an often revolutionary intelligentsia with a potential for affecting the world far beyond the borders of the land they left. A sign of this vigor is the forthcoming in Farsi of István Mészáros' important book Beyond Capital (published by Monthly Review Press, 1996) translated by the close friend of Monthly Review Dr. Morteza Mohit. For this edition István Mészáros wrote a special introduction.

—The Editors

We live in an age of unprecedented historical crisis. Its severity can be gauged by the fact that we are not facing a more or less extensive cyclic crisis of *capitalism* as experienced in the past, but the deepening structural crisis of the *capital system* itself. As such this crisis affects—for the first time ever in history—the whole of humankind, calling for quite fundamental changes to the way in which the social metabolism is controlled if humanity is to survive.

Constitutive elements of the capital system (like monetary and merchant capital, as well as original sporadic commodity production) go back thousands of years in history. However, for most of those thousands of years they all remained subordinate parts of the specific systems of social metabolic control which historically prevailed at the time,

including the slave-owning and feudal modes of production and distribution. Only in the last few centuries, under the bourgeois capitalist form, could capital successfully assert its rule as an all-embracing “organic system.” To quote Marx:

It must be kept in mind that the new forces of production and relations of production do not develop out of nothing, nor drop from the sky, nor from the womb of the self-positing Idea; but from within and in antithesis to the existing development of production and the inherited, traditional relations to property. While in the completed bourgeois system every economic relation presupposes every other in its bourgeois economic form, and everything posited is thus also a presupposition, this is the case with every *organic system*. This organic system itself, as a totality, has its presuppositions, and its development to its totality consists precisely in subordinating all elements of society to itself, or in creating out of it the organs which it still lacks; this is historically how it becomes a totality.¹

In this way, by extricating its age-old organic constituents from the shackles of earlier organic systems, and by demolishing the barriers that prevented the development of some vital new constituents,² capital as an all-embracing organic system could assert its rule in the last three centuries as *generalized commodity production*. By reducing and degrading human beings to the status of mere “costs of production” as “necessary labour power,” capital could treat even living labor as nothing more than a “marketable commodity,” just like any other, subjecting it to the dehumanizing determinations of economic compulsion.

Earlier forms of productive interchange of human beings among themselves and with nature were on the whole oriented toward production for *use*, with a large degree of *self-sufficiency* as their systematic determination. This imposed on them a great vulnerability to capital’s sharply contrasting reproductive principles which were already operative, even if at first on a very small scale, within the confines of the old systems. For *none* of the constitutive elements of capital’s dynamically unfolding organic system was ever in *need* of, nor indeed *capable* of, confining itself to the structural constraints of self-sufficiency. Capital as a system of social metabolic

control could emerge and triumph over its historical antecedents by abandoning all considerations of human need as tied to the limitations of non-quantifiable “*use-values*,” superimposing on the latter—as the absolute pre-requisite of their legitimation to become acceptable production targets—the fetishistic imperatives of both quantifiable and *ever-expanding* “*exchange-value*.” This is how the historically specific form of the capital system; its *bourgeois capitalist* variety, came into being. It had to adopt the overwhelmingly *economic* mode of extracting surplus-labor as strictly quantified *surplus-value*—in contrast to both the *precapitalist* and the Soviet type *postcapitalist*, primarily *political*, forms of controlling the extraction of *surplus-labor*—as at the time by far the most dynamic way of realizing the expansion-imperative of the victorious system. Moreover, thanks to the perverse circularity of capital’s fully completed organic system—in which “every economic relation presupposes every other in its bourgeois economic form” and “everything posited is also a presupposition”—the world of capital could also assert its claims to being a forever rust-proof “iron cage” from which no escape could or should be contemplated.

However, the absolute necessity to successfully meet the requirements of unconstrainable expansion—the secret of capital’s irresistible advance—had brought with it an insurmountable historical limitation as well. This it did not only for the sociohistorically specific form of bourgeois *capitalism*, but altogether for the viability of the *capital system* in general. For this system of social metabolic control either had to succeed in imposing on society its ruthless and ultimately irrational expansionary logic, no matter how devastating the consequences; or it had to adopt some rational constraints which directly contradicted its innermost determination as an unrestrainable expansionary system. The twentieth century had witnessed many failed attempts that aimed at overcoming the systemic limitations of capital, from Keynesianism to Soviet type state interventionism, together with the political and military conflagrations which they gave rise to. And yet, all that such attempts could achieve was only the “hybridization” of

the capital system, compared to its classical economic form (with extremely problematical implications for the future), but not structurally viable solutions.

It is highly significant in this respect that, as a matter of fact—and notwithstanding the triumphalism which celebrated in recent years both the mythical virtues of an idealized “market society” (not to mention the apologetic propagandistic use to which the concept of a totally fictitious “social market” had been put) and the “end of history” under the never again challengeable hegemony of liberal capitalist principles—the capital system could not be completed as a *global* system in its proper *capitalist* form; i.e. by making the overwhelmingly *economic* mode of extraction and appropriation of surplus-labor as surplus-value *universally* prevail. Capital in the twentieth century was forced to respond to ever more extensive crises (which brought with them even two formerly unimaginable world wars) by accepting “hybridization”—in the form of an ever greater intrusion of the state into the socio-economic reproduction process—as a way out of its difficulties, ignoring the longer term dangers of the adopted remedy for the viability of the system. Characteristically, attempts to turn back the clock (even as far back as the age of a grossly misrepresented Adam Smith) are prominent among the uncritical defenders of the capital system. Thus the representatives of the “Radical Right” continue to fantasize about “rolling back the boundaries of the state,” although in reality the opposite trend is clearly observable, due to the inability of the system to secure capital-expansion on the required scale without the administration of ever greater doses of “extraneous help” by the state in one form or another.

Capitalism may have gained the upper hand in the former Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe, but it is quite wrong to describe the present state of the world as successfully ruled by *capitalism* everywhere, even though it is certainly under the rule of *capital*. In China, for instance, capitalism is forcefully established in coastal “enclaves” only, leaving the overwhelming majority of the population (that is, well over one billion people) outside its framework. And even in those limited

areas of China, where capitalist principles prevail, the economic extraction of surplus-labor must be propped up by heavy political constituents, so as to keep the cost of labor artificially low. Similarly India—another country with an immense population—is only partially under the successful management of the capitalistically regulated socioeconomic metabolism, leaving the overwhelming majority of the population in a very different predicament so far.³ Even in the former Soviet Union it would be quite inaccurate to talk about the successful restoration of capitalism everywhere, despite the complete dedication of the ruling political bodies to that task for no less than the last twelve years. Furthermore, the failed “modernization” of the so-called “third world,” in conformity to the prescriptions propagated for decades by “advanced capitalist” countries, underlines the fact that vast numbers of people—not only in Asia but also in Africa and Latin America—could not be brought into the long-promised land of the liberal capitalist millennium. Thus, capital could succeed in adjusting itself to the pressures emanating from the end of its “historical ascendancy” only by turning its back to its own progressive phase of development, and abandoning altogether the liberal capitalist project, despite all self-serving ideological mystification to the contrary. This is why it should be even more obvious today than ever before that the target of socialist transformation cannot be *capitalism* only, if it is to be of a lasting success; it must be the *capital system* itself.

This system in all of its capitalist or postcapitalism forms is (and must remain) *expansion-oriented* and driven by *accumulation*.⁴ Naturally, what is at issue in this regard is not a process designed for the increasing satisfaction of human need. Rather, it is the expansion of capital as an end in itself, serving the preservation of a system which could not survive without constantly asserting its power as an extended mode of reproduction. The capital system is *antagonistic* to its inner core, due to the hierarchical structural subordination of labor to capital which totally usurps—and must always usurp—the power of decision making. This structural antagonism prevails everywhere, from the smallest constitutive “microcosms” to the

“macrocosms” embracing the most comprehensive reproductive structures and relations. And precisely because the antagonism is *structural*, the capital system is—and must always remain—*unreformable* and *uncontrollable*. The historical failure of reformist social democracy provides an eloquent testimony to the system’s unreformability; and the deepening structural crisis, with its dangers for the very survival of humanity, puts sharply into relief its uncontrollability. Indeed, it is inconceivable to introduce the fundamental changes required for remedying the situation without overcoming the destructive structural antagonism both in the reproductive “microcosms” and in the “macrocosm” of the capital system as an all-embracing mode of social metabolic control. And that can be achieved only by putting in its place a radically different form of social metabolic reproduction, oriented toward qualitative redimensioning and the increasing satisfaction of human need; a mode of human interchange controlled not by a set of fetishistic material determinations but by the associated producers themselves.

The capital system is characterized by a threefold fracture between (1) production and its control, (2) production and consumption, and (3) production and (both internal and international) circulation of the products. As a result, it is an irretrievably “*centrifugal*” system in which the conflicting and internally antagonistic parts pull in very different directions. In the theories formulated from capital’s standpoint in the past, remedies to the missing *cohesive* dimension were on the whole wishfully conceptualized. At first, by Adam Smith, as “the invisible hand,” which was supposed to render political interventions by the state and its politicians—explicitly condemned by Smith as most harmful—quite superfluous. Later Kant offered a variation on Adam Smith’s “Commercial Spirit,” advocating the realization of “moral politics” and (rather naively) expecting from the agency of the “Commercial Spirit” not only universally diffused economic benefits but also a politically commendable reign of “perpetual peace” within the framework of a harmonious “League of Nations.” Later still, at the peak of this line of thought, Hegel introduced

the idea of the “cunning of Reason,” attributing to it the fulfilment of a very similar function to Adam Smith’s “invisible hand.” However, in complete contrast to Smith—and reflecting the much more conflict-torn predicament of his own times—Hegel had directly assigned the totalizing/universalistic role of Reason in human affairs to the nation state, scornful of Kant’s belief in the coming reign of “perpetual peace.” Yet he also insisted that “the Universal is to be found in the State, in its laws, its universal and rational arrangements. The State is the Divine Idea as it exists on Earth,”⁵ since in the modern world “the State as the image and actuality of Reason has become objective.”⁶ Thus, even the greatest thinkers who conceptualized these problems from the standpoint of capital could only offer some idealized solutions to the underlying contradictions—i.e. to the ultimately irremediable threefold fracture mentioned above. They have, nevertheless, acknowledged at least by implication the existence of such contradictions, in contrast to the present-day apologists of capital—like the representatives of the “Radical Right,” for instance—who would never admit the existence of anything in need of substantive remedy in their cherished system.

Given the centrifugal internal determination of its constitutive parts, the capital system could only find a most problematical cohesive dimension, in the form of its national state formations. The latter embodied the comprehensive/totalizing political command structure of capital, which proved itself adequate to its role throughout the system’s historical ascendancy. However, the fact that this remedial cohesive dimension was historically articulated in the form of the far-from-mutually benevolent and harmonious nation states, with no desire whatsoever for conforming to the Kantian imperative of the coming “perpetual peace,” meant that the state in its actuality was indeed “infected with contingency”⁷ in more ways than one. First, because the forces of destruction at the disposal of modern warfare have become absolutely prohibitive, depriving thereby the nation states of their ultimate sanction for resolving the most comprehensive international antagonisms in the form of yet another world war.

Second, because the end of capital's historical ascendancy had brought into prominence the system's irrational wastefulness and destructiveness on the plane of production,⁸ intensifying thereby the need for securing new outlets for capital's wares through hegemonic/imperialist domination under conditions when the traditional way of imposing it could no longer be considered a readily available option; not only for strictly military reasons but also on account of the grave potential in such steps for a global trade war. And third, because the contradiction, veiled until recently, between the unconstrainable expansionary drive of capital (tending toward full global integration) and its historically articulated state formations—as competing nation states—had broken out into the open, underlying not only the *destructiveness* of the system but also its *uncontrollability*. No wonder, therefore, that the end of capital's historical ascendancy in the twentieth century carried with it also the profound crisis of all of its known state formations.

Nowadays, as an automatic solution to all of the encountered problems and contradictions, we are offered the magic wand of *globalization*. This solution is presented as a complete novelty, as if the issue of globalization appeared on the historical horizon only in the last decade or two, with its promise of universal benevolence on par with the once similarly hailed and revered notion of the “invisible hand.” Yet in actuality the capital system was inexorably moving toward “globalization” from its inception. Given the unconstrainability of its constitutive parts, it could not be envisaged successfully completing itself in any other form than as an all-embracing global system. This is why capital had to attempt to demolish all obstacles that stood in the way of its full unfolding; and why it must continue to do so for as long as the system survives.

That is where a massive contradiction becomes clearly visible. For whereas capital in its productive articulation—in our own times primarily through the agency of giant *national-transnational* corporations—tends toward a global integration (and in that sense truly and substantively toward globalization), the vital configuration of “total social capital” or

“global capital” is to the present day totally devoid of its proper state formation. This is what sharply contradicts the intrinsic determination of the system itself as inexorably global and unrestrainable. Thus the missing “state of the capital system” as such demonstrates capital’s inability to carry the objective logic of the system’s unrestrainability to its ultimate conclusion. It is this circumstance that must put the sanguine expectations of “globalization” under the shadow of grievous failure, without removing, however, the problem itself—namely the necessity of a truly global integration of humanity’s reproductive interchanges—to which only a socialist solution can be envisaged. For without a socialist solution the necessarily growing deadly antagonism and hegemonic confrontations of the principal competing powers for the required outlets—as indeed, to take only one example, within two or three decades the economy of China (even at its present rate of development) is bound to far outweigh the economic force of the United States, with a military potential to match it—can only result in a catastrophic threat to the survival of humankind.

The structural crisis of capital is the sobering manifestation of the system’s encounter with its own intrinsic limits. The adaptability of this mode of social metabolic control could go as far as the “extraneous help” compatible with its systematic determinations allowing it to do so. The very fact that the need for such “extraneous help” surfaced—and despite all mythology to the contrary continued to grow throughout the twentieth century—was always an indication that something rather different from the normality of capital’s economic extraction and appropriation of surplus-labor had to be introduced in order to counter the severe “dysfunctions” of the system. Yet, for the greater part of our century capital could digest the administered doses of remedy, and in the few “advanced capitalist countries”—but only there—it could even celebrate its most obviously successful expansionary phase of development under the postwar decades of Keynesian state interventionism.

The severity of the *structural* crisis of the capital system confronts socialists with a major strategic challenge, yet offering at the same time also some vital new possibilities for meeting that challenge. What needs to be stressed here is that no matter how abundant and how varied the forms of twentieth century “extraneous help”—quite unlike the early phases of capitalist development, when absolutist political “extraneous help” (as pointed out by Marx with reference to Henry VIII and others) was instrumental, nay vital, in establishing capital’s normality and healthy functioning as an all-embracing system—all such help in our times proved to be *insufficient* for the purpose of securing the system’s permanent stability and unchallengeable vitality. Quite the contrary. For twentieth century state interventions could only intensify capital’s “hybridization” as a social reproductive system, thereby piling up troubles for the future. In the years ahead of us the structural crisis of capital—asserting itself as the *chronic insufficiency of “extraneous help”* at the present stage of development—is bound to get deeper. It is also bound to reverberate across the globe, even in the most remote corners of the world, affecting every aspect of life, from the directly material reproductive dimensions to the most mediated intellectual and cultural concerns.

To be sure, a historically viable change can only be a truly *epochal* one, setting the task to go *beyond capital* itself as a mode of social metabolic control. This means a move of much greater magnitude than the supersession of the feudal system by the hierarchical structural subordination of labor to any alien controlling force whatsoever; as opposed to simply changing the specific historical *form* in which the extraction and appropriation of surplus-labor is perpetuated, as always happened in the past.

The “personifications of capital” can assume many different forms, from the private capitalist variety to present-day theocracy, and from “Radical Right” ideologues and politicians to postcapitalist party and state bureaucrats. They can even present themselves as political transvestites, donning the attire of “New Labour” (as does the government today in

Britain, for instance) so as to spread mystification in the interest of capital's continued rule with that much greater ease. All this, however, cannot resolve the system's structural crisis and the need for overcoming it through the hegemonic alternative of labor to capital's social metabolic order. This is what puts on the historical agenda the task for the radical rearticulation of the socialist movement as an uncompromising mass movement. To end the tragically self-disarming separation of labor's "industrial arm" (the trades unions) from its "political arm" (the traditional parties), and to embark on politically conscious direct action, as opposed to the meek acceptance of ever worsening conditions imposed on the producers by the pseudo-democratic rules of the parliamentary game, are the necessary orienting targets and transitional moves of a revitalized socialist movement in the foreseeable future. The continued submission to globalizing capital's globally destructive course of development is truly no option.

NOTES

1. Marx, *Grundrisse*, p.278.
2. Above all by overcoming the prohibition on the sale and purchase of both land and labor, securing thereby the triumph of alienation in every domain.
3. Vast numbers are just surviving (if they do) "from hand to mouth" in the "traditional economy," and the number of those who remain completely marginalized, even if still hoping—mostly in vain—for a job of some kind in the capitalist system, almost defies comprehension. Thus, "While the total number of unemployed persons registered with employment exchanges stood at 336 million in 1993, the number of employed persons in the same year according to the Planning Commission stood at only 307.6 million, which means that the number of registered unemployed persons is higher than the number of persons employed. And the rate of percentage increase of employment is almost negligible." Sukomal Sen, *Working Class of India: History of the Emergence and Movement 1830-1990, With an Overview up to 1955* (Calcutta: K.P. Bagchi & Co., 1997) p. 554.
4. The chronic crisis of accumulation as a grave structural problem has been highlighted by Paul Sweezy and Harry Magdoff on several occasions.
5. Georg Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, p. 39.
6. *ibid*, p. 223.
7. *ibid*, p. 214.
8. Schumpeter used to praise capitalism—rather self-complacently—as a reproductive order of "*productive destruction*"; today it would be much more correct to characterize it as ever-increasingly a system of "*destructive production*."

DIGITAL DIPLOMA MILLS: THE AUTOMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

by DAVID F. NOBLE

Recent events at two large North American universities signal dramatically that we have entered a new era in higher education, one which is rapidly drawing the halls of academe into the age of automation. In mid-summer the UCLA administration launched its historic "Instructional Enhancement Initiative" requiring computer web sites for all of its arts and sciences courses by the start of the fall term, the first time that a major university has made mandatory the use of computer telecommunications technology in the delivery of higher education. In partnership with several private corporations (including the Times Mirror Company, parent of the *Los Angeles Times*), moreover, UCLA has spawned its own for-profit company, headed by a former UCLA vice chancellor, to peddle online education (the Home Education Network).

This past spring in Toronto, meanwhile, the full-time faculty of York University, Canada's third largest, ended a historic two-month strike having secured for the first time anywhere formal contractual protection against precisely the kind of administrative action being taken by UCLA. The unprecedented faculty job action, the longest university strike

David F. Noble, co-founder of the National Coalition for Universities in the Public Interest, teaches history at York University, Toronto. His latest book is *The Religion of Technology*. He is currently writing a book on this subject entitled *Digital Diploma Mills*.

in English Canadian history, was taken partly in response to unilateral administrative initiatives on the implementation of instructional technology, the most egregious example of which was an official solicitation to private corporations inviting them to permanently place their logo on a university online course in return for a \$10,000 contribution to courseware development. As at UCLA, the York University administration has spawned its own subsidiary (Cultech), directed by the vice president for research and several deans and dedicated, in collaboration with a consortium of private sector firms, to the commercial development and exploitation of online education.

Significantly, at both UCLA and York, the presumably cyber-happy students have given clear indication that they are not exactly enthusiastic about the prospect of a high-tech academic future, recommending against the Initiative at UCLA and at York lending their support to striking faculty and launching their own independent investigation of the commercial, pedagogical, and ethical implications of online educational technology. This fall the student handbook distributed annually to all students by the York Federation of Students contained a warning about the dangers of online education.

Thus, at the very outset of this new age of higher education, the lines have already been drawn in the struggle which will ultimately determine its shape. On the one side university administrators and their myriad commercial partners, on the other those who constitute the core relation of education: students and teachers. (The chief slogan of the York faculty during the strike was "the classroom versus the boardroom"). It is no accident, then, that the high-tech transformation of higher education is being initiated and implemented from the top down, either without any student and faculty involvement in the decision-making or despite it. At UCLA the administration launched their Initiative during the summer when many faculty are away and there was little possibility of faculty oversight or governance; faculty were thus kept in the dark about the new web requirement until the last moment.

UCLA administrators also went ahead with their Initiative, which is funded by a new compulsory student fee, despite the formal student recommendation against it. Similarly the initiatives of the York administration on the deployment of computer technology in education were taken without faculty oversight and deliberation, much less student involvement.

What is driving this headlong rush to implement new technology with so little regard for the pedagogical and economic costs, and at the risk of student and faculty alienation and opposition? A short answer might be the fear of getting left behind, the incessant pressures of “progress.” But there is more to it. For the universities are not simply undergoing a technological transformation. Beneath that change, and camouflaged by it, lies another: the commercialization of higher education. For here as elsewhere technology is but a vehicle and a disarming disguise.

The major change to befall the universities over the last two decades has been the identification of the campus as a significant site of capital accumulation, a change in social perception which has resulted in the systematic conversion of intellectual activity into intellectual capital and, hence, intellectual property. There have been two general phases of this transformation. The first, which began twenty years ago and is still underway, entailed the commoditization of the research function of the university, transforming scientific and engineering knowledge into commercially viable proprietary products that could be owned, bought, and sold in the market. The second, which we are now witnessing, entails the commoditization of the educational function of the university, transforming courses into courseware, and the activity of instruction itself into commercially viable proprietary products that can be owned, bought, and sold in the market. In the first phase the universities became the site of the production and sale of patents and exclusive licenses. In the second, they are becoming the site of the production of—as well as the chief market for—copyrighted videos, courseware, CD-ROMs, and web sites.

The first phase began in the mid-1970s when, in the wake of the oil crisis and intensifying international competition, corporate and political leaders of the major industrialized countries of the world recognized that they were losing their monopoly over the world's heavy industries and that, in the future, their supremacy would depend upon their monopoly over the knowledge which had become the lifeblood of the new so-called "knowledge-based" industries (space, electronics, computers, materials, telecommunications, and bioengineering). This focus upon "intellectual capital" turned their attention to the universities as its chief source, implicating the universities as never before in the economic machinery. In the view of capital, the universities had become too important to be left to the universities. Within a decade there was a proliferation of industrial partnerships and new proprietary arrangements, as industrialists and their campus counterparts invented ways to socialize the risks and costs of creating this knowledge while privatizing the benefits. This unprecedented collaboration gave rise to an elaborate web of interlocking directorates between corporate and academic boardrooms and the foundation of joint lobbying efforts epitomized by the work of the Business-Higher Education Forum. The chief accomplishment of the combined effort, in addition to a relaxation of antitrust regulations and greater tax incentives for corporate funding of university research, was the 1980 reform of the patent law which for the first time gave universities automatic ownership of patents resulting from federal government grants. Laboratory knowledge now became patented, that is, it became intellectual capital and intellectual property. As patent holding companies, the universities set about at once to codify their intellectual property policies, develop the infrastructure for the conduct of commercially viable research, cultivate their corporate ties, and create the mechanisms for marketing their new commodity, exclusive licenses to their patents. The result of this first phase of university commoditization was a wholesale reallocation of universities resources toward their research function at the expense of their educational function.

Class sizes swelled, teaching staffs and instructional resources were reduced, salaries were frozen, and curricular offerings were cut to the bone. At the same time, tuition soared to subsidize the creation and maintenance of the commercial infrastructure (and correspondingly bloated administration) that has never really paid off. In the end students were paying more for their education and getting less, and the campuses were in crisis.¹

The second phase of the commercialization of academia, the commoditization of instruction, is touted as the solution to the crisis engendered by the first. Ignoring the true sources of the financial debacle—an expensive and low-yielding commercial infrastructure and greatly expanded administrative costs—the champions of computer-based instruction focus their attention instead upon increasing the efficiencies of already overextended teachers. And they ignore as well the fact that their high-tech remedies are bound only to compound the problem, increasing further, rather than reducing, the costs of higher education. (Experience to date demonstrates clearly that computer-based teaching, with its limitless demands upon instructor time and vastly expanded overhead requirements—equipment, upgrades, maintenance, and technical and administrative support staff—costs more, not less, than traditional education, whatever the reductions in direct labor, hence the need for outside funding and student technology fees.) Little wonder, then, that teachers and students are reluctant to embrace this new panacea. Their hesitation reflects not fear but wisdom.²

But this second transformation of higher education is not the work of teachers or students, the presumed beneficiaries of improved education, because it is not really about education at all. That's just the name of the market. The foremost promoters of this transformation are rather the vendors of the network hardware, software, and "content"—Apple, IBM, Bell, the cable companies, Microsoft, and the edutainment and publishing companies Disney, Simon and Schuster, Prentice-Hall, *et al.*—who view education as a market for their wares, a market predicted by the Lehman Brothers

investment firm to be worth several hundred billion dollars. “Investment opportunity in the education industry has never been better,” one of their reports proclaimed, indicating that this will be “the focus industry” for lucrative investment in the future, replacing the health care industry. (The report also forecasts that the educational market will eventually become dominated by EMOs—education maintenance organizations—just like HMOs in the healthcare market.) It is important to emphasize that, for all the democratic rhetoric about extending educational access to those unable to get to the campus, the campus remains the real market for these products, where students outnumber their distance learning counterparts six-to-one.

In addition to the vendors, corporate training advocates view online education as yet another way of bringing their problem-solving, information-processing, “just-in-time” educated employees up to profit-making speed. Beyond their ambitious in-house training programs, which have incorporated computer-based instructional methods pioneered by the military, they envision the transformation of the delivery of higher education as a means of supplying their properly prepared personnel at public expense.

The third major promoters of this transformation are the university administrators, who see it as a way of giving their institutions a fashionably forward-looking image. More importantly, they view computer-based instruction as a means of reducing their direct labor and plant maintenance costs—fewer teachers and classrooms—while at the same time undermining the autonomy and independence of faculty. They are also hoping to get a piece of the commercial action for their institutions or themselves, as vendors in their own right of software and content. University administrators are supported in this enterprise by a number of private foundations, trade associations, and academic-corporate consortia which are promoting the use of the new technologies with increasing intensity. Among these are the Sloan, Mellon, Pew, and Culpeper Foundations, the American Council on Education, and, above all, Educom, a consortium representing the manage-

ment of 600 colleges and universities and a hundred private corporations.

Last but not least, behind this effort are the ubiquitous technozealots who simply view computers as the panacea for everything, because they like to play with them. With the avid encouragement of their private sector and university patrons, they forge ahead, without support for their pedagogical claims about the alleged enhancement of education, without any real evidence of productivity improvement, and without any effective demand from either students or teachers.

In addition to York and UCLA, universities throughout North America are rapidly being overtaken by this second phase of commercialization. There are the stand-alone virtual institutions like the University of Phoenix, the wired private institutions like the New School for Social Research, and the campuses of state universities like the University of Maryland and the new Gulf-Coast campus of the University of Florida (which boasts no tenure). On the state level, the states of Arizona and California have initiated their own statewide virtual university projects, while a consortium of western "Smart States" has launched its own ambitious effort to wire all of its campuses into an online educational network. In Canada, a national effort has been undertaken, spearheaded by the Telelearning Research Network centered at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, to bring most of the nation's higher education institutions into a "Virtual U" network.

The overriding commercial intent and market orientation behind these initiatives is explicit, as is illustrated by the most ambitious U.S. effort to date, the Western Governors' Virtual University Project, whose stated goals are to "expand the marketplace for instructional materials, courseware, and programs utilizing advanced technology," "expand the marketplace for demonstrated competence," and "identify and remove barriers to the free functioning of these markets, particularly barriers posed by statutes, policies, and administrative rules and regulations."

"In the future," Utah governor Mike Leavitt proclaimed, "an institution of higher education will become a little like a

local television station.” Startup funds for the project come from the private sector, specifically from Educational Management Group, the educational arm of the world’s largest educational publisher, Simon and Schuster. The proprietary impulse behind their largesse is made clear by Simon and Schuster CEO Jonathan Newcomb: “The use of interactive technology is causing a fundamental shift away from the physical classroom toward anytime, anywhere learning—the model for post secondary education in the twenty-first century.” This transformation is being made possible by “advances in digital technology, coupled with the protection of copyright in cyberspace.”

Similarly, the national effort to develop the “Virtual U” customized educational software platform in Canada is directed by an industrial consortium which includes Kodak, IBM, Microsoft, McGraw-Hill, Prentice-Hall, Rogers Cablesystems, Unitel, Novasys, Nortel, Bell Canada, and MPR Teltech, a research subsidiary of GTE. The commercial thrust behind the project is explicit here, too. Predicting a potential fifty billion dollar Canadian market, the project proposal emphasizes the adoption of “an intellectual property policy that will encourage researchers and industry to commercialize their innovations” and anticipates the development of “a number of commercially marketable hardware and software products and services,” including “courseware and other learning products.” The two directors of the project, Simon Fraser University professors, have formed their own company to peddle these products in collaboration with the university. At the same time, the nearby University of British Columbia has recently spun off the private WEB-CT company to peddle its own educational website software, WEB-CT, the software designed by one of its computer science professors and now being used by UCLA. In recent months, WEB-CT has entered into production and distribution relationships with Silicon Graphics and Prentice-Hall and is fast becoming a major player in the U.S. as well as Canadian higher education market. As of the beginning of the fall term, WEB-CT licensees now include, in addition to UCLA and California State Uni-

versity, the Universities of Georgia, Minnesota, Illinois, North Carolina, and Indiana, as well as such private institutions as Syracuse, Brandeis, and Duquesne.

The implications of the commoditization of university instruction are two fold in nature, those relating to the university as a site of the production of the commodities and those relating to the university as a market for them. The first raises, for the faculty, traditional labor issues about the introduction of new technologies of production. The second raises for students major questions about costs, coercion, privacy, equity, and the quality of education.

With the commoditization of instruction, teachers as labor are drawn into a production process designed for the efficient creation of instructional commodities, and hence become subject to all the pressures that have befallen production workers in other industries undergoing rapid technological transformation from above. In this context faculty have much more in common with the historic plight of other skilled workers than they care to acknowledge. Like other forms of work, their activity is being restructured, via the technology, in order to reduce their autonomy, independence, and control over their work and to place workplace knowledge and control as much as possible into the hands of the administration. As in other industries, the technology is being deployed by management primarily to discipline, deskill, and displace labor.

Once faculty and courses go online, administrators gain much greater direct control over faculty performance and course content than ever before, and the potential for administrative scrutiny, supervision, regimentation, discipline, and even censorship increases dramatically. At the same time, the use of the technology entails an inevitable extension of working time and an intensification of work as faculty struggle at all hours of the day and night to stay on top of the technology and respond, via chat rooms, virtual office hours, and e-mail, to both students and administrators to whom they have now become instantly and continuously accessible. The technol-

ogy also allows for much more careful administrative monitoring of faculty availability, activities, and responsiveness.

Once faculty put their course material online, moreover, the knowledge and course design skill embodied in that material is taken out of their possession, transferred to the machinery, and placed in the hands of the administration. The administration is now in a position to hire less-skilled, and hence cheaper, workers to deliver the technologically pre-packaged course. It also allows the administration, which claims ownership of this commodity, to peddle the course elsewhere without the original designer's involvement or even knowledge, much less financial interest. The buyers of this packaged commodity, meanwhile, other academic institutions, are able thereby to contract out, and hence outsource, the work of their own employees and thus reduce their reliance upon their in-house teaching staff.

Most importantly, once the faculty convert their courses to courseware, their services are, in the long run, no longer required. They become redundant, and when they leave, their work remains behind. In Kurt Vonnegut's classic novel *Player Piano*, the ace machinist Rudy Hertz is flattered by the automation engineers who tell him his genius will be immortalized. They buy him a beer. They capture his skills on tape. Then they fire him. Today faculty are falling for the same tired line, that their brilliance will be broadcast online to millions. Perhaps, but without their further participation. Some skeptical faculty insist that what they do cannot possibly be automated, and they are right. But it will be automated anyway, whatever the loss in educational quality. Because education, again, is not what all this is about; it's about making money. In short, the new technology of education, like the automation of other industries, robs faculty of their knowledge and skills, their control over their working lives, the product of their labor, and, ultimately, their means of livelihood.

None of this is speculation. This fall the UCLA faculty, at the the administration's request, have dutifully or grudgingly (it doesn't really matter which) placed their course work—ranging from just syllabi and assignments to the entire body

of course lectures and notes—at the disposal of their administration, to be used online, without asking who will own it, much less how it will eventually be used and with what consequences. At York University, at least one part time faculty member was required to put her courses on video, CD-ROM or the Internet or lose her job. She was then hired to teach her own now-automated course at a fraction of her former compensation. The New School in New York now routinely hires outside contractors from around the country, mostly unemployed PhDs, to design online courses. The designers are not hired as employees but are simply paid a modest flat fee and are required to surrender to the university all rights to their course. The New School then offers the course without having to employ anyone. And this is just the beginning.

Educom, the academic-corporate consortium, has recently established their Learning Infrastructure Initiative which includes the detailed study of what professors do, breaking the faculty job down in classic Tayloristic fashion into discrete tasks, and determining what parts can be automated or outsourced. Educom believes that course design, lectures, and even evaluation can all be standardized, mechanized, and consigned to outside commercial vendors. “Today you’re looking at a highly personal human-mediated environment,” Educom president Robert Heterich observed. “The potential to remove the human mediation in some areas and replace it with automation—smart, computer-based, network-based systems—is tremendous. It’s gotta happen.”

Toward this end, university administrators are coercing or enticing faculty into compliance, placing the greatest pressures on the most vulnerable—untentured and part-time faculty, and entry-level and prospective employees. They are using the academic incentive and promotion structure to reward cooperation and discourage dissent. At the same time they are mounting an intensifying propaganda campaign to portray faculty as incompetent, hide-bound, recalcitrant, inefficient, ineffective, and expensive—in short, in need of improvement or replacement through instructional technologies. Faculty are portrayed above all as obstructionist, as

standing in the way of progress and forestalling the panacea of virtual education allegedly demanded by students, their parents, and the public.

The York University faculty had heard it all. Yet still they fought vigorously and ultimately successfully to preserve quality education and protect themselves from administrative assault. During their long strike they countered such administration propaganda with the truth about what was happening to higher education and eventually won the support of students, the media, and the public. Most important, they secured a new contract containing unique and unprecedented provisions which, if effectively enforced, give faculty members direct and unambiguous control over all decisions relating to the automation of instruction, including veto power. According to the contract, all decisions regarding the use of technology as a supplement to classroom instruction or as a means of alternative delivery (including the use of video, CD-ROMs, internet websites, computer-mediated conferencing, etc.) "shall be consistent with the pedagogic and academic judgments and principles of the faculty member employee as to the appropriateness of the use of technology in the circumstances." The contract also guarantees that "a faculty member will not be required to convert a course without his or her agreement." Thus, the York faculty will be able to ensure that the new technology, if and when used, will contribute to a genuine enhancement rather than a degradation of the quality of education, while at the same time preserving their positions, their autonomy, and their academic freedom. The battle is far from won, but it is a start.

The second set of implications stemming from the commoditization of instruction involve the transformation of the university into a market for the commodities being produced. Administrative propaganda routinely alludes to an alleged student demand for the new instructional products. At UCLA officials are betting that their high-tech agenda will be "student driven," as students insist that faculty make fuller use of web technology in their courses. To date, however, there has been no such demand on the part of students, no serious study

of it, and no evidence for it. Indeed, the few times students have been given a voice, they have rejected the initiatives hands down, especially when they were required to pay for it (the definition of effective demand, i.e. a market). At UCLA, students recommended against the Instructional Enhancement Initiative. At the University of British Columbia, home of the WEB-CT software being used at UCLA, students voted in a referendum four-to-one against a similar initiative, despite a lengthy administration campaign promising them a more secure place in the high-tech future. Administrators at both institutions have tended to dismiss, ignore, or explain away these negative student decisions, but there is a message here: students want the genuine face-to-face education they paid for, not a cyber-counterfeit. Nevertheless, administrators at both UCLA and UBC decided to proceed with their agenda anyway, desperate to create a market and secure some return on their investment in the information technology infrastructure. Thus, they are creating a market by fiat, compelling students (and faculty) to become users and hence consumers of the hardware, software, and content products as a condition of getting an education, whatever their interest or ability to pay. Can all students equally afford this capital-intensive education?

Another key ethical issue relates to the use of student online activities. Few students realize that their computer-based courses are often thinly veiled field trials for product and market development; that while they are studying their courses, their courses are studying them. In Canada, for example, universities have been given royalty-free licenses to Virtual U software in return for providing data on its use to the vendors. Thus, all online activity, including communication between students and professors and among students, are monitored, automatically logged and archived by the system for use by the vendor. Students enrolled in courses using Virtual U software are in fact formally designated "experimental subjects." Because federal monies were used to develop the software and underwrite the field trials, vendors were compelled to comply with ethical guidelines on the experimental

use of human subjects. Thus, all students once enrolled are required to sign forms releasing ownership and control of their online activities to the vendors. The form states "as a student using Virtual U in a course, I give my permission to have the computer-generated usage data, conference transcript data, and virtual artifacts data collected by the Virtual U software ... used for research, development, and demonstration purposes."

According to UCLA's Home Education Network President John Korbara, distance learning courses are likewise routinely monitored and archived for use by company officials. On the UCLA campus, according to Harlan Lebo of the Provost's office, student use of the course websites will be routinely audited and evaluated by the administration. Marvin Goldberg, designer of the UCLA WEB-CT software acknowledges that the system allows for "lurking" and automatic storage and retrieval of all online activities. How this capability will be used and by whom is not altogether clear, especially since websites are typically being constructed by people other than the instructors. What third parties (besides students and faculty in the course) will have access to the student's communications? Who will own student online contributions? What rights, if any, do students have to privacy and proprietary control of their work? Are they given prior notification as to the ultimate status of their online activities, so that they might be in a position to give, or withhold, their informed consent? If students are taking courses which are just experiments, and hence of unproven pedagogical value, should students be paying full tuition for them? And if students are being used as guinea pigs in product trials masquerading as courses, should they be paying for these courses or be paid to take them? More to the point, should students be content with a degraded, shadow cyber-education? In Canada, student organizations have begun to confront these issues head on, and there are some signs of similar student concern emerging in the United States as well.

In his classic 1959 study of diploma mills for the American Council on Education, Robert Reid described the typical

diploma mill as having the following characteristics: “no classrooms,” “faculties are often untrained or nonexistent,” and “the officers are unethical self-seekers whose qualifications are no better than their offerings.” It is an apt description of the digital diploma mills now in the making. Quality higher education will not disappear entirely, but it will soon become the exclusive preserve of the privileged, available only to children of the rich and the powerful. For the rest of us a dismal new era of higher education has dawned. In ten years, we will look upon the wired remains of our once great democratic higher education system and wonder how we let it happen. That is, unless we decide now not to let it happen.

NOTES

1. Tuition began to outpace inflation in the early 1980s, at precisely the moment when changes in the patent system enabled the universities to become major vendors of patent licenses. According to data compiled by the National Center for Educational Statistics, between 1976 and 1994 expenditures on research increased 21.7 percent at public research universities, while expenditure on instruction decreased 9.5 percent. Faculty salaries, which had peaked in 1972, fell precipitously during the next decade and have since recovered only half the loss.
2. Recent surveys of the instructional use of information technology in higher education clearly indicate that there have been no significant gains in either productivity improvement or pedagogical enhancement. Kenneth C. Green, Director of the Campus Computing Project, which conducts annual surveys of information technology use in higher education, noted that “the campus experience over the past decade reveals that the dollars can be daunting, the return on investment highly uncertain.” “We have yet to hear of an instance where the total costs (including all realistically amortized capital investments and development expenses, plus reasonable estimates for faculty and support staff time) associated with teaching some unit to some group of students actually decline while maintaining the quality of learning,” Green wrote. On the matter of pedagogical effectiveness, Green noted that “the research literature offers, at best, a mixed review of often inconclusive results, at least when searching for traditional measures of statistical significance in learning outcomes.”

For references including the sources of all quotations, etc., contact the author David F. Noble, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, CA 91711.

BOOKS

The Judas Economy and the Limits of Acceptable Debate: A Critique of Wolman and Colamosca

by Paul Street

William Wolman and Anne Colamosca, *The Judas Economy: the Triumph of Capital and the Betrayal of Work* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1997) \$25.00, 240 pp.

At the very moment that United States policy makers are claiming, in the name of “welfare reform,” to uphold the holy value of the work ethic like never before, it is intriguing to see William Wolman, editor of the frankly capitalist *Business Week* and former *Business Week* feature writer Anne Colamosca arguing that work in 1990s America is undergoing a historic devaluation at the hands of evil capitalists. Their recent *The Judas Economy: the Triumph of Capital and the Betrayal of Work* argues that American workers are victims of a brave new world of weak governments, strong markets increasingly dominated by high finance, hyper-mobile capital, and surplus global labor.

In what they see as a historic new phase of American and world capitalism, employment growth in the United States is predicated on stagnant incomes and declining benefits for American workers. Globe-trotting United States investors are shifting money and technology to lower-wage, high-growth zones of the world system so that United States workers are left to toil alongside falling amounts of capital equipment. Bond traders and international

Paul Street is a research associate at the Office for Social Policy Research, Northern Illinois University, De Kalb, Illinois, and an instructor in modern U.S. labor and business history at De Paul University’s School for New Learning and at the Illinois Institute of Technology’s Rice campus in Wheaton, Illinois.

currency markets demand and receive from government anti-inflationary, slow-growth policies that protect the financial assets of the wealthy but restrict job and wage growth (thereby dooming meaningful welfare “reform”) in the United States. The stock market and related returns on capital explode while Americans who rely on work struggle against the odds of a newly tilted global playing field to maintain current living standards.

Wolman and Colamosca date the origin of this great capitalist “betrayal” from the collapse of Communism. By interpreting that collapse as proof that the market is God and state planning is “the devil incarnate,” they argue, United States policy- and opinion-makers have blinded themselves to the fact that capitalism works best when market rule and capital mobility are tempered by government intervention and considerations of social equity. The defeat of Communism deeply reinforces this blindness by opening vast new global labor reserves for harvest by multinational corporations and other global investors. Even the most supposedly protected professional members of the “Eurocentric” workforces (“elite workers”) are now slated for displacement by eager members of the world system’s “New Leviathan”: the expanded planetary labor pool of the post-cold war era. Wolman and Colamosca harken back to the “rapid growth” of the U.S. and world capitalist “Golden Age” (1945 to the mid-1970s), when, they claim, the governments of developed nations were centrally involved in liberal Keynesian policy-making that meshed good wages, an expanding social safety net, diminishing income inequality, and international economic cooperation to restrict the destabilizing flows of capital.

In the most useful sections of their book, Wolman and Colamosca offer pointed criticisms of prevalent corporate, Wall Street, and government claims purporting to show the basic underlying health and dynamism of the U.S. system in the 1990s. They mock the celebration of United States supposed ongoing export boom with statistics showing that imports are rising at a faster rate. They find no evidence to support the notion that workers losing good jobs in the downsized economy are finding refuge in small businesses. They criticize the idea that U.S. corporations in the 1990s have dramatically increased their efficiency, becoming “lean and mean” through downsizing, re-engineering, and investing in hightechnology. That notion is contradicted by the persistently high ratio of supervisors to workers in the U.S. workplace and the

persistent relative stagnation of U.S. productivity rates through the 1990s—the latter partly reflecting the fact “U.S. labor is cheap and is being widely substituted for capital.” They claim, finally, that the current fad for mass participation in the stock market through mutual funds is a cruel Wall Street pipe dream that fools workers into thinking they can make up for their lost returns on work and attain long-term security by becoming owners of relatively tiny and risky ownership shares.

It might seem curious to see writers with an explicitly capitalist perspective so frankly criticize their system’s masters and apologists. But Wolman and Colamosca’s version of history contains distortions and omissions that reflect the constricting hold of that perspective and make their criticisms less surprising. Their nostalgia for the Golden Age neglects both the profoundly anomalous historical context—the relative absence of foreign competition—of U.S. prosperity in those years and the profound limits of that prosperity (20 to 40 percent of the United States population lived at or below the poverty level in the early 1960s). Wolman and Colamosca fail to mention that the United States postwar capitalist expansion depended significantly on massive defense expenditures (equaling half of the federal budget in the mid 1960s) that squandered and still waste resources in ways that help explain American decline and inequality over the last thirty years. The military-Keynesian Golden Age is more aberrant and less attractive than they acknowledge.

Their dating of capital’s “betrayal” is misleading. The United States business class’s campaign to rollback working Americans’ Golden Age attainments and reconcentrate wealth and power in the United States—what UAW President Douglas Fraser in 1978 called “one-sided class warfare”—has been underway since at least the mid-1970s, hitting its greatest stride under Reagan. It was and is seen in numerous social and political developments that do not receive significant attention in *The Judas Economy*—deregulation, regressive tax policies, the war against unions, the increasing use of “contingent workers” (involuntary part-timers and temporary workers), welfare “reform,” and the rise of corporate propaganda selling the “free market” as the only legitimate arbiter of the public good.¹

The notion that the globalization of investment and production in a new world of information capitalism makes it virtually impossible for U.S. workers to maintain their past living and work-

ing standards is of course widely accepted on the left as well as in business circles.² But when we consider the long-term falling wages of numerous American workers whose jobs are not susceptible to export or replacement by imports (this would include most workers in the service and public sectors), the still very large percentage of U.S. production that is for domestic sale (over 90 percent), and the fact that the great majority of U.S. foreign direct investment goes to other advanced industrial states and not the low wage periphery and semi-periphery, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the alternately fatalistic and celebratory chant of globalization has become a great capitalist smokescreen. That chant disarms any resistance to capital and diverts us from seeing the real not-so novel nature of U.S. capitalists' all-too domestic assault on U.S. workers. It cloaks capital's "low road" method of restoring profit rates damaged by, yes, foreign competition since the 1970s—cutting labor costs and attacking state regulation rather than re-tooling with the latest and best technologies and work schemes—as the inevitable result of great external forces and actors beyond plausible human and democratic control.³ And since globalization is by definition a worldwide force that hits all nations, and there is no indication (the authors give none) that the United States is more subject to its ravages than other industrialized nations, it cannot tell us why U.S. workers now earn much less than their European and Japanese counterparts or why the United States is now the most unequal of all such states.⁴

Wolman and Colamosca present no evidence that workers in developed states in the 1990s are any more vulnerable to the impact of international capital than they were throughout the history of capitalism. Nor do they seem to appreciate the persistently uncertain and impoverished status of the "developing" economies and therefore of investments in those "emerging markets."⁵

Of course, Wolman and Colamosca's notion that there is something new about an inverse relationship between the returns on capital and the living and working standards of workers should surprise anyone possessing a basic understanding of the historical system called capitalism. When have workers been the Christ(s) of any capitalist political economy? Driven by their system's core structural incentives towards the extraction of surplus value from labor, capitalists' history is littered with moments when they "betrayed" their "promises" to working people. Much, if not most, of

what Wolman and Colamosca present as historically novel can be understood as good-old capitalism, which has always linked a certain amount of globalization—itself a hallmark product of capitalism as analyzed by Marx—with class oppression within specific regions and nation states.

Wolman's and Colamosca's policy proposals, offered in the last chapter of a section entitled "Saving Capitalism From Itself," are too weak and unspecific to inspire much faith in the notion that anything could be done to counter the awesome globalizing forces that they feel provide the essential explanation for the dangerously unbalanced capitalism of the 1990s. They omit numerous reforms that might help reverse the declining fortunes of workers in their ongoing domestic conflict with capital: raising the minimum wage, strengthening labor laws (including the extension of collective bargaining protections to "exempt" workers and workfare recipients), mandatory benefits for part-time workers, mandatory four to five weeks of vacation, livable-wage ordinances, the prohibition of mandatory overtime, employee participation councils—in other words, class struggle from the bottom up to counter the ongoing class warfare from the top down.

Wolman and Colamosca ignore the unavoidable question of how to pursue rapid growth that is sustainable in an environmental as well as an economic sense. This will garner them deserved dismissal by those who refuse, for "green" reasons, to accept black and white choices between mean-spirited slow-growth—the path of newly hegemonic finance capital for Wolman and Colamosca—and expansionary high growth on the Golden Age model. Here is another false dichotomy brought to us by capitalism, a system in mutually reinforcing conflict with both workers and the earth. But to raise the issue of that historical system *per se* is to step beyond the boundaries of acceptable debate for writers like Wolman and Colamosca.

"Wow!" exclaims the former chairman of the FDIC on the book's jacket cover. "Not since Marx has anyone taken up the cause of 'the worker' against the demon capital with such eloquence." Not quite. While they are pleased to cite radical historians (including Eric Hobsbawm) and cull statistics from leftish economists (the late David Gordon) and think tanks (the Economic Policy Institute), Wolman and Colamosca subscribe, as good corporate liberals, to what we might call the Charles Dickens myth—the notion that it's not the underlying logic and structure of the capitalist

system, but rather the misbehavior of wrong-headed masters that lies at the root of workers' problems.⁶ And since Wolman and Colamosca think that the historical project of socialism (which they identify with the false communism of the defeated Soviet Union) is doomed by the fragmenting, postmodern forces of globalization, they feel that it is no longer dangerous to publicly argue with those who run the system they still credit with "unparalleled power to promote economic growth."

Radicals can thank Wolman and Colamosca for providing useful ammunition in the continuing war of ideas with the business class (splits and divisions within the ruling-class and among its intellectual apologists are always useful for left forces). They would be naive to ignore the negative impact that the new global reserves of the post-cold war era do and will have—under the command of capital—on workers in the United States and other core capitalist nations. But we should criticize *The Judas Economy* for its failure to confront the underlying, historically specific logic of capitalism, which is itself both the taproot of globalization and the reason that globalization is a threat to workers. That system of ownership, control, and exploitation does not deserve to be saved even if such salvation were possible.

NOTES

1. Bennett Harrison and Barry Bluestone, *The Great U-Turn: Corporate Restructuring and the Polarizing of America* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *The New Class War: Reagan's Attack on the Welfare State and Its Consequences* (New York: Pantheon, 1982); David Gordon, *Fat and Mean: the Corporate Squeeze on Working Americans and the Myth of Managerial Downsizing* (New York: the Free Press, 1996) pp. 204-237; Noam Chomsky, *Deterring Democracy* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992) pp. 81-89, 139-140. To grasp the deeper origins of capital's "betrayal," Wolman and Colamosca might have consulted back issues of their own journal, which was often quite explicit in pronouncing the need for workers to give back so that capital could have more. In October of 1974, *Business Week* opined that such sacrifice was necessary "because the basic health of the United States is based on the basic health of its corporations and banks." The journal acknowledged that "it will be a hard pill to swallow—the

idea of doing with less so that business can have more." Indeed, "nothing this nation, or any other nation, has done in modern economic history compares in difficulty with the selling job that must now be done to make people accept the new reality." "The Options for the Debt Economy," *Business Week* (October 12, 1974) p. 120. The "selling job" continues to this day, with the notion of an all-powering globalization as one of its key ideological underpinnings!

2. Wolman and Colamosca give the thesis an original spin by dating the supposedly globalization-produced "betrayal" of workers from the end of the cold war. But since we know that workers' situation in the United States has been deteriorating since at least the mid-1970s, it appears that this periodization has more to do with the authors' taste for suggestive metaphors—they fear that U.S. capitalism is currently "snatching defeat from the jaws of victory" in the cold war victory over "the socialist system"—than with real historical development.
3. Doug Henwood, "Post What?" *Monthly Review*, vol. 48, no. 4 (September 1996): 3-8; Gordon, *Fat and Mean*, pp. 144-17, 187-195; William K. Tabb, "Globalization is an Issue, the Power of Capital is the Issue," *Monthly Review*, vol. 49, no. 2 (June 1997) pp. 20-29; Ellen Meiksins-Wood, "Reply to A. Sivandan," *Monthly Review*, vol. 48, no. 7 (February 1997) pp. 25-26; Frances Fox-Piven, "The New Reserve Army of Labor," *Audacious Democracy: Labor, Intellectuals, and the Social Reconstruction of America*, Stephen Fraser and Joshua Freeman, eds., (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1997) pp. 107-108. Claiming that U.S. workers now compete for the first time in a global labor market, economist Michael Drury of the McVean Trading Company recently told *Chicago Tribune* writer William Neikirk, with a smugness that almost defies belief, that "you can't afford to coddle our least productive workers when millions of others will do the same work at a lower wage. That reality, however much you want to dampen it through policy, isn't going to go away." Neikirk, "President Must Answer to Wall Street," *Chicago Tribune*, (January 21, 1997) pp. 1, 11.
4. R. C. Longworth, "A Bottom-Line Blight on American Life," *Chicago Tribune* (October 5, 1997) Section 2, 1, 8; Piven, "The New Reserve Army," pp. 108.
5. See, for example, R.C. Longworth, "Backlash at the Global Economy," *Chicago Tribune* (September, 28 1997) section 1 pp. 1, 10.
6. See George Orwell, "Charles Dickens," *The Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell, Volume 1: An Age Like This, 1920-1940*, Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, eds., (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1968) pp. 413-428.

SCIENCE^{AND} THE RETREAT FROM REASON

JOHN GILLOTT & MANJIT KUMAR

Moving away from the industrial revolution's promise of progress through "mastery" of nature, the feats of the engineer are increasingly seen as meddlesome, even destructive, interventions against nature and all things natural. Providing a clear and accessible introduction to key areas of modern scientific thought, the authors draw out the philosophical implications of a glorification of nature and the natural: rejection of humanism, and inability to comprehend—much less make use of—the subtleties of nature. In response, they positively reinterpret the Enlightenment-based values of progress through development of humanity's understanding and shaping of the physical world, made possible by scientific research and experimentation.

\$18.00 PAPER/\$48.00 CLOTH/256 PP.

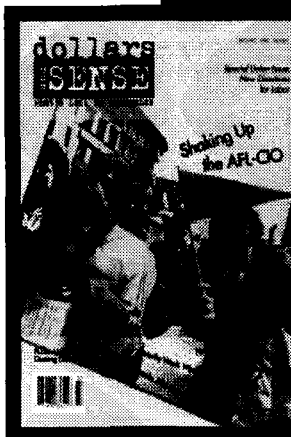
TO ORDER: 1-800-670-9499

MONTHLY REVIEW PRESS

122 WEST 27TH STREET • NEW YORK, NY 10001
TEL: (212) 691-2555 • FAX: (212) 727-3676

Get a new perspective on the economy.

From welfare to NAFTA, *Dollars and Sense* magazine offers progressive perspectives on today's pressing economic issues. In-depth features expose the real effects of public policies, telling the stories that mainstream media neglect.



"*Dollars & Sense* is a treasure trove of information and analyses for citizens who want an economy that works for *all* Americans."

— Rep. Maxine Waters
Democrat, California

"*Dollars & Sense* gives facts and analysis that help in the fight for good jobs for all."

— Ron Carey,
Teamsters Union

.....
"The re are few things as important as the kind of work *Dollars & Sense* is doing."
— Noam Chomsky
.....

Name

To order by Visa or Mastercard,
call toll-free 1-888-SENSE-77.

Address

Or, clip and return this ad to receive
a free trial copy of *Dollars
and Sense*. If you choose to
subscribe, you'll pay only \$18.95
for one year (6 issues) — 20% off
the cover price.

City, State, Zip

Return to:
ONE SUMMER ST
SOMERVILLE MA 02143

SENSE

CRITICAL SOCIOLOGY

Announcing

A Special Issue of *Critical Sociology*:

Social Change in South Africa

edited by Thembisa Waetjen and Martin Murray
(Volume 22, Number 3)

- Harry Bernstein, *White Agriculture in 'New South Africa'*
- T. Maloka and D. Gordon, *Politics of Chieftainship*
- Edward Ramsamy, *The Indian Minority in S.A.*
- Franco Barchiesi, *Prospects for Organized Labor*
- Kimberly Lanegran, *Civic Associations in Transition*
- Jeremy Seekings, *Decline of Movement Organizations*

Other Special Issues Still Available:

- *North America After NAFTA* (Vol. 21, No. 2)
- *Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Issues* (Vol. 20, No. 3)
- *German Sociology* (Vol. 17, No. 3)
- *Analyzing Power Structures* (Vol. 16, No. 2-3)
- *Twenty Years of Sociological Liberation* (Vol. 15, No. 2)

Subscription Information: individuals: \$20/year (3 issues); students and unemployed: \$15/year; institutions: \$45/year. Canadian currency add 30 percent. Overseas airmail add \$15/year. Back issues: \$6/single issue; \$12/double issue.

Order from: Critical Sociology, Department of Sociology, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, U.S.A.

Economy Connection

Speakers & Resources on Political Economics

a project of the Union for Radical Political Economics (URPE)



Has the economy been mystifying you lately?

We can provide a speaker for a political or educational event, or someone to discuss economic questions informally with members of your community organization, union or political group, or in your classroom. Our members speak and write about a wide range of domestic and international issues. Contact us and we will find someone who is right for you!

URPE National Office, 1 Summer Street, Somerville, MA 02143

(617) 776-5888 • email: URPE@igc.org

NYC Area: (201) 792-7459 • email: soapbox@igc.org

Historical Materialism

search in critical marxist theory

Historical Materialism is a new journal which seeks to play a part in the recovery and renewal of the critical and explanatory potential of classical Marxism. The first issue will be available in Autumn 1997. These are some of the articles that are featured:

- Meiksin Wood:** The non-history of capitalism
- Barker:** Reflections on two books by Ellen Wood
- Weeks:** The law of value and the analysis of underdevelopment
- or Leslie:** Woman and ware, craving and corpse in Benjamin's Arcades project
- Burnham:** Globalisation: states, market and class relations

Subscribe now! Send a cheque or international money order to:

Historical Materialism, The Editors, London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, UK. E-Mail: hm@lse.ac.uk

Subscription rate	UK£10	Overseas£13 or US\$20	Airmail overseas£16 or US\$25
International rate	UK£30	Overseas£38 or US\$60	Airmail overseas£41 or US\$60

(Continued from inside back cover)

starring on CBS's *The Gregory Hines Show*, and Pamela Koslow Hines, producer of numerous shows including the Tony Award-winning Broadway musical *Jelly's Last Jam*. All in all, a lively heart-warming affair which we wish could have embraced in person all of the MR family.

We regret to report the death on December 5th of Stanley Moore, age eighty-three. He was a good friend of two of us over many decades. He was an exceptionally erudite scholar in philosophy and political and social analysis, especially in Marxist thought. MR published his *Three Tactics: The Background in Marx* (1963). Reed College fired him in 1954 from his job as teacher of philosophy because he refused to tell the House Un-American Activities Committee whether he was a member of the Communist Party. The story of that firing and later attempts to get Reed College to make amends was told in Michael Munk's "Reversing the Verdicts: The Case of Reed College" (MR, March 1992).

Subscribe

please!

☐ \$28 one-year (U.S.)

☐ \$36 one-year (foreign)

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

.....
☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Card Number/Expiration Date

MONTHLY REVIEW

122 West 27th St. ♦ New York, NY 10001

e-mail: mreview@igc.apc.org

(Continued from inside front cover)

including: anti-racism, women's rights, housing, health care, lesbian and gay rights, workers' rights, the rights of disabled persons, and immigrants' rights. In addition to its focus on progressive causes, it is also unique in trying to operate a partnership between donors and activists. Donors are encouraged to be more than providers of funds, rather to become activists in the grassroots organizations they support. Its name says a lot, since it recalls the *North Star* newspaper established by Frederick Douglass on December 3, 1847. Moreover the annual awards are given to commemorate both his name and his spirit as a lifelong spokesperson and fighter, not only for the abolition of slavery but for justice for all oppressed men and women.

The other recipients of the Frederick Douglass Awards in the 150th anniversary year of the *North Star* reflects the range of the Fund's interests: *City Limits*, a magazine covering the movement of activists and experts concerned with New York's low-income communities, including notable investigative reporting on city housing, welfare, and landlord exploitation.; Juan Gonzales, an activist from early youth, now a staff columnist on the *New York Daily News*, noted for his accurate reporting and critical commentary in areas underplayed or badly distorted by the media as a whole (including the 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama, and struggles in Central America and the Caribbean) also an active Newspaper Guild member who chaired the Guild strike committee during the five-month strike at the *New York Daily News* in 1990-91; Manning Marable, history professor and director of the Institute for Research in African-American Studies at Columbia University, an engaged political activist as well as an outstanding scholar: his most recent book is *Black Liberation in Conservative America* (1997), and forthcoming in 1998 is his *Black Leadership: Ideology, Politics and Culture in African-American History*; and Susan Meiselas, one of the leading contemporary photographers, whose work portrays people in their struggle for social justice and human dignity, and whose photographic essays documented history in her books, *Nicaragua, Chile: From Within*, *Carnival Strippers*, and *Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History*.

Perhaps we are reading too much into the inclusion of *MR* in this roster and the reasons given for this choice, among which is that we "continue to widen the horizons of Marxist inquiry." That is nice to hear from an organization devoted to grassroots movements. The presentation process was very different from similar ceremonies in progressive organizations. If anything, it was like a miniature, albeit low-key, theatrical or movie-award affair, but without the envelopes. When called, the recipients had to enter on stage left, walk across a brightly-lit bare stage to the podium at stage right, where two hosts officiated. The hosts were Gregory Hines, Tony Award-winning actor and dancer, currently

(Continued on page 64)



Inventing Western Civilization

THOMAS C. PATTERSON

"In this wonderful book, Thomas Patterson effectively dethrones the concept of 'civilization' as an abstract good transcending human society. Combining the latest scholarship with his own sensitive thinking, Patterson shows the clear and specific class, "race," and gender connotations of the term as it has been used and manipulated both historically and in the present age."

—MARTIN BERNAL

"This is a first-rate analysis of interest to scholars and policy makers in every field."

—SANDRA HARDING

\$13.00 PB9614 paper/\$26.00 CL9606 cloth/144 pp. (\$3.00 P&H)

MONTHLY REVIEW PRESS 1-800-670-9499
T: (212) 691-2555 · 122 WEST 27th STREET · NEW YORK, NY 10001